



POEMS

ROBERT
UNDERWOOD
JOHNSON



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POEMS

By the Same Author,

PUBLISHED SEPARATELY:

THE WINTER HOUR,
AND OTHER POEMS

(1892)

SONGS OF LIBERTY,
AND OTHER POEMS

(1897)

POEMS

BY
ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON



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I

THE WINTER HOUR
AND OTHER POEMS



TO RICHARD WATSON GILDER

INVOCATION: TO THE GORSE

“When the gorse is out of bloom, then love is out of season.”—
ENGLISH PROVERB.

HARDY gorse, that all year long
Blooms upon the English moor,
Let me set thee at the door
Of this little book of song.

When the dreary winter lowers,
Vainly dost thou seek a fellow
To thy blossom brave and yellow—
Color of the cheeriest flowers.

Thou of love perennial art
Such a symbol that they say:
“When no gorse-bloom greets the day,
There’s no love in any heart.”

Thus all days are Love's and thine.—
Spicy flower on thorny branch,
In Love's service thou art stanch—
Wilt thou, wilding, enter mine?

THE WINTER HOUR

I

OF all the hours of day or night
Be mine the winter candle-light,
When Day's usurpers of Love's throne —
Fame, Pride, and tyrant Care—are flown,
And hearts are letters of hid desire
Yielding their secrets at the fire.
Now beauty in a woman's face
Glows with a sympathetic grace,
And friend draws closer unto friend,
Like travelers near a journey's end;
In casual talk some common hope
Finds fresher wing and farther scope;
The eye has language fit to speak
Thoughts that by day 't were vain to seek
Out of their silence; and the hand
Grasps with a comrade's sure demand.
Pile high the winter's cheer and higher,—
The world is saved, not lost, by fire!

HEARTH-SONG

WHEN November's night comes down
With a dark and sudden frown,
Like belated traveler chill
Hurrying o'er the tawny hill,—
Higher, higher
Heap the pine-cones in a pyre!
Where 's a better friend than fire?

Song 's but solace for a day;
Wine 's a traitor not to trust;
Love 's a kiss and then away;
Time 's a peddler deals in dust.
Higher, higher
Pile the driftwood in a pyre!
Where 's a firmer friend than fire?

Knowledge was but born to-night;
Wisdom 's to be born to-morrow;
One more log—and banish sorrow,
One more branch—the world is bright.
Higher, higher
Crown with balsam-boughs the pyre!
Where 's an older friend than fire?

II

O SILENT hour that sacred is
To our sincerest reveries!—
When peering Fancy fondly frames
Swift visions in the oak-leaved flames;
When Whim has magic to command
Largess and lore from every land,
And Memory, miser-like, once more
Counts over all her hoarded store.
Now phantom moments come again
In a long and lingering train,
As not content to be forgot—
(O Death! when I remember not
Such moments, may my current run,
Alph-like, to thy oblivion!):
The summer bedtime, when the sky—
The boy's first wonder— gathers nigh,
And cows are lowing at the bars,
And fireflies mock the early stars
That seem to hang just out of reach—
Like a bright thought that lacks of speech;
The wistful twilight's tender fall,
When to the trundle comes the call

Of fluting robins, mingling sweet
With voices down the village street ;
The drowsy silence, pierced with fear
If evil-omened owl draw near,
Quaking with presage of the night ;
The soft surrender when, from sight
Hid like a goddess in a cloud,
Comes furtive Sleep, with charm endowed
To waft the willing child away
Far from the margin of the day,
Till chanticleer with roystering blare
Of reveille proclaims the glare.
Remember ? — how can one forget
(Since Memory 's but Affection's debt)
Those faëry nights that hold the far,
Soft rhythm of the low guitar,
When not more sweetly zephyr blows
And not more gently Afton flows
Than the dear mother's voice, to ease
The hurts of day with brook and breeze,
To soothing chords that haunt the strings
Like shadows of the song she sings !
And as the music's lullaby
Locks down at last the sleepy eye,

Green visions of a distant hill
The fancy of the singer fill,
While spreads Potomac's pausing stream,
And moonlight sets her heart adream
Of that old time when love was made
With valentine and serenade.

Now, too, come bedtimes when the stair
Was never climbed alone.—Ah, where,
Beyond the midnight and the dawn,
Has now that other footstep gone?
Does sound or echo more reveal
When thirty winters may not steal
That still-returning tread,—that voice,
That made the timid child rejoice
Against the terrors of the wind,—
That tender tone that smoothed the mind?
Great heart of pity! it was then
God seemed a father, denizen
Of His own world, not chained to feet
Of some far, awful judgment-seat.
Then was revealed the reverent soul
Whom creed nor doubt could from the
goal

Of goodness swerve; who need not bend
To be of each just cause the friend.
Of whose small purse and simple prayer
The neediest had the largest share;
Beloved of child, and poor, and slave,
Nor yet more lovable than brave;
Whom place could not allure, nor pelf,—
To all men generous save himself;
Whose passion Freedom was — with no
Heat-lightning rage devoid of blow,
But as a bridegroom might defend
His chosen, to the furious end.

Still other moments come apace,
Each with fond, familiar face:
The pleasures of an inland boy
To whom great Nature was a toy
For which all others were forsook —
A spirit blithesome as a brook
Whose song in ripples crystalline
Doth flow soft silences between;
The dormant soul's slow wakenings
To dimly-apprehended things;

The sudden vision in the night
As by a conflagration's light;
The daily miracle of breath;
The awe of battle and of death;
The tears of grief at Sumter's gun,
The tears of joy when war was done,
And all the fainting doubt that masked
As hope when news of war was asked.
And oh! that best-remembered place,
That perfect moment's melting grace,—
The look, the smile, the touch, the kiss,
The halo of self-sacrifice,—
When Nature's passion, bounteous June,
To Love's surrender added boon,
As though the heir of every age
Had come into his heritage.

THE LOST ROSE

THERE was a garden sweet and gay,
Where rarest blossoms did delay
The look that Fanny bent to find
The flower fairest to her mind,
Till, at her word, I plucked for her
A rose of York-and-Lancaster.

The red did with the white agree,
Like passion blent in purity;
And as she blushed and blushed the more,
Till she was like the bloom she bore,
I said, "Dear heart, I too prefer
The rose of York-and-Lancaster."

'T is years ago and miles away!
For oh! nor rose nor maid could stay
To freshen other Junes. And yet
How few who do not quite forget! —
Or know to which the words refer:
"Sweet rose of York-and-Lancaster."

In vain, when roses do appear
Upon the bosom of the year,
I search the tangle and the town
Among the roses of renown,
And still the answer is—"Oh, sir,
We know no York-and-Lancaster."

But ah, my heart, it knows the truth,
And where was sown that seed of youth;
And though the world have lost the rose,
There 's still one garden where it grows—
Where every June it breathes of her,
My rose of York-and-Lancaster.

III

Now call the Muses' aid to flout
The bleak storm's roaring rage without;
And bring it hail, or bring it snow,
It shall be Love's delight to show
What Fire and two defenders dare
Against the legions of the air,
Whose sharpest arrows shall not find
Cleft in the armor of the mind.
Why dread we Winter's deep distress,
His pale and frigid loneliness,
When here at hand are stored, in nooks,
All climes, all company, in books!
A moving tale for every mood,
Shakspeare for all,—the fount and food
Of gentle living,—Fancy's link
'Twixt what we are and what we think,—
Fellow to stars that nightly plod
Old Space, yet kindred to the clod.
Choose now from his world's wizard play
What is frolicsome and gay;
'T was for such evening he divined
Not Juliet but Rosalind.

Put the storied sorrow down,—
Not to-night, with Jove-like frown,
Shall the mighty Tuscan throw
Fateful lightnings at his foe,
Nor Hawthorne bend his graceful course
To follow motive to its source.
No, let gladness greet the ear:
Cervantes' wit, or Chaucer's cheer,
Or Lamb's rich cordial, pure and sweet,
Where aromatic tinctures meet;
Or princely Thackeray, whose pages
Yield humor wiser than the sages;
Or, set in cherished place apart,
Poets that keep the world in heart:
Milton's massive lines that pour
Like waves upon a windward shore;
Wordsworth's refuge from the crowd—
The peace of noon-day's poisèd cloud;
That flaming torch a jealous line
Passed on to Keats from Beauty's shrine;
Visions of Shelley's prophet-soul,
That, seeing part, could sing the whole,
Most like a lark that mounts so high
He sees not earth but from the sky.

And of the bards who in the grime
And turmoil of our changing time
Have kept the faith of men most pure
The three whose harps shall last endure :
Browning, Knight of Song,—so made
By Nature's royal accolade,—
Whose lines, as life-blood full and warm,
Search for the soul within the form,
And in the treasures of whose lore
Is Love, Love, ever at the core ;
Tennyson, of the silver string,
Wisest of the true that sing,
And truest singer of the wise ;
And he whose "stairway of surprise"
Soars to an outlook whence appear
All best things, fair, and sure, and near.

IV

UPON the wall some impress fine
Of Angelo's majestic line —
Seer or sibyl, dark with fate ;
Near, and all irradiate,

Bellini's holy harmonies,
Bringing the gazer to his knees;
One group to hint from what a height
Titian with color dowers the sight;
A pageant of Carpaccio,
Flushed with an autumn sunset-glow;
Then, of Luini's pensive race,
The Columbine's alluring grace;
And, echo of an age remote,
Beato's pure and cloistered note.
And be not absent from the rest
Some later flame of beauty (blest
As a new star), lest it be said
That Art, that had its day, is dead.
Let Millet speak in melting tone —
Voicing the life that once was stone,
Ere Toil had found another dawn
Of Bethlehem at Barbizon.
Nor is it winter while Dupré
With daring sunlight leads the way
Into the woodland rich and dim;
Who love the forest, follow him;
And they who lean the ear to reach
The whispering breath of Nature's speech,

May with Daubigny wait the night
Beside a lake of lambent light
And margèd darkness — at the hour
(Soul of the evening!) when the power
Of man, that morn with empire shod,
Is shattered by a thought of God!
And ah, one more: we will not wait
For Death to let us call him great,
But, taking counsel of the heart
Stirred by his pure and perfect art,
Among the masters make a place
For Dagnan's fair Madonna's face.

A MADONNA OF DAGNAN-BOUVERET

OH, brooding thought of dread!
Oh, calm of coming grief!
Oh, mist of tears unshed
Above that shining head
That for an hour too brief
Lies on thy nurturing knee!
How shall we pity thee,
Mother of sorrows—sorrows yet to be!

That babyhood unknown
With all of bright or fair
That lingers in our own
By every hearth has shone.
Each year that light we share
As Bethlehem saw it shine.
Be ours the comfort thine,
Mother of consolations all divine!

V

NOR be the lesser arts forgot
On which Life feeds and knows it not,
That everywhere from roof to portal
Beauty may speak of the immortal:
Forms that the fancy over-fill;
Colors that give the sense a thrill;
Soft lights that fall through opal glass
On mellow stuffs and sturdy brass;
Corners of secrecy that invite
Comfort, the handmaid of Delight;
The very breath of sculptures old
Held poised within a perfect mold;

A dainty vase of Venice make,
Fashioned for its one rose's sake —
Ay, winter's miracle of flowers
To cheat the mood and mask the hours:
Love's velvet-petaled pledge of June,
That, on the wings of Passion strewn,
Made courtly Persia conqueror
Of thrice the world she lost in war; —
Jonquils, that Tuscan sunshine hold
Within their happy hearts of gold; —
Narcissus, such as still are found
By Marathon's mountain-envied mound —
Food of the soul, well bought with bread,
As sage Hippocrates hath said.
All these perchance shall faintly yield
Odors from some Sicilian field
Where young Theocritus deep-strayed
In blooms celestial — where his shade,
Haunting his storied Syracuse,
Finds balm for his neglected Muse.
Add wanton smilax to entwine
Your Dancing Faun or God of Wine,
And you shall summon in a band
The joys of every summer land.

VI

BUT there 's a vision stirs the heart
Deeper than books or flowers or art,—
When Music, mistress of the mind,
Lender not borrower from the Wind,
Rival of Water and of Light,
Adds her enchantment to the Night.
What thoughts! what dreams! what ecstasies
When heart and fingers touch the keys!
Across what gulf of fate Love springs
To Love, if Love caress the strings!
By this mysterious amulet
One shall remember or forget;
When words and smiles and tears shall fail,
The might of Music shall prevail;
Shall move alike the wise and weak;
All dialects alike shall speak;
Outglow the rainbow to the doomed,—
Consuming all, be unconsumed;
Shall save a nation in its throes,
Luring with concord grappling foes;
Shall madden thus, yet shall be glad
(Oh, paradox!) to soothe the mad.

This rhythmic language made to reach
Beyond the reticence of speech—
Bland as the breeze of May it sighs,
Or rolls reverberant till the skies
Tremble with majesty! Not the mote
Most hid of all creation's rote
But holds some message that shall be
Transmuted into harmony.
Already, since the lisping-time
When music was but chant or chime,
What spirits have to man been lent
From God's discordless firmament!—
Beethoven, brother of the Nine,
But with a birthright more divine,—
Whose harmonies that heavenward wend
Wings to the laden spirit lend
Until, serenely mounting higher,
It melts into the starry choir;
Wagner, in whom the Passions meet
To throw themselves at Music's feet,—
Whose murmurings have charm to wring
From Love the secret of the Spring,—
And in whose clamor sounds the siege
Of heaven when Lucifer was liege.

Händel, whose aspirations seem
Like steps of gold in Jacob's dream;
Mozart, simplest of the great,
Heir of Melody's estate,
Who did blithe pipes of Pan prolong
And heighten to a seraph song.
Schumann, rare poet, with a lyre
Stringed in Imagination's fire;
And oh, that one of human strain!—
Chopin, beloved child of pain,
To whom the whole of Love was known—
Marvel, and mystery, and moan,
The joy secure, the jealous dart
Deep-ambushed in the doubting heart,
And all the perilous delight
That waits on doubt, as dawn on night.

Ah, who shall wake the charm that lies
Past what is written for the eyes
In such a scroll? The poet's need
Is that a poet's heart should read.
Happy the winter hour and fleet
When flame and waiting passion meet

In her pure fire whose chords betray
The St. Cecilia of our day!
Oh, velvet of that Saxon hand
So lately iron to command!—
Like, at the shower's sudden stop,
The softness of the clinging drop.
What tender notes the trance prolong
Of that famed rhythmic cradle-song!
How faëry is her woven spell
Of minuet or tarantelle!
Who would return to earth when she
Transports us with a rhapsody!
And when in some symphonic burst
Of joy her spirit is immersed,
That path celestial fain to share,
We vow to breathe but noble air!

VII

WARMED with melody like wine,
Lighted by the friendly shine
Of the rich-replenished hearth,
Let us drink of wine and mirth

While waning evening's aftermath
Grows pleasant as a winding path
With wit's surprises and the tale
Adventurous, spreading sudden sail
For Arcady and hallowed haunts
Along the shores of old Romance:
Now shall fare the fancy forth
To pillared grottoes of the north,
Where circling waters come again
Like thoughts within a sleepless brain;
Or, coursing down a softer coast
Whose beauty is the Old World's boast,
Shall pause for words while memory's flame
Kindles at Taormina's name.

And now in shifting talk appears
Pomp of cities clad with years:
Gay or gloomy with her skies,
Gray Paris like an opal lies
Sparkling on the front of France.
Avignon doth hold a lance
In a tourney-list with Nîmes.
Fair Seville basks in helpless dream

Of conquest, as in caged air
Dreams the tamed lion of his lair.
Regal Genoa still adorns
Her ancient throne; and Pisa mourns.
Now we traverse holy ground
Where three miracles are found:
One of beauty—when with dyes
Of her own sunset Venice vies.
One of beauty and of power—
Rome, the crumbled Babel-tower
Of centuries piled on centuries—
Scant refuge from Oblivion's seas
That swept about her. And the third?—
O heart, fly homeward like a bird,
And look, from Bellosguardo's goal,
Upon a city with a soul!
Who that has climbed that heavenly
height
When all the west was gold with light,
And nightingales adown the slope
To listening Love were lending hope,
Till they by vesper bells were drowned,
As though by censers filled with sound—

Who—who would wish a worthier end
To every journey? or not blend
With those who reverently count
This their Transfiguration Mount?

LOVE IN ITALY

THEY halted at the terrace wall;
Below, the towered city lay;
The valley in the moonlight's thrall
Was silent in a swoon of May.
As hand to hand spoke one soft word
Beneath the friendly ilex-tree,
They knew not, of the flame that stirred,
What part was Love, what Italy.

They knew what makes the moon more bright
Where Beatrice and Juliet are,—
The sweeter perfume in the night,
The lovelier starlight in the star;
And more that glowing hour did prove,
Beneath the sheltering ilex-tree,—
That Italy transfigures Love,
As Love transfigures Italy.

•

VIII

AND thou, who art my winter hour—
Book, picture, music, friend, and flower—
If on such evening, dear, I trace
Paths far from Love's divine embrace,
Wandering till long absence grows
Into brief death—less death's repose—
Let me be missed with love and cheer,
As miss we those of yesteryear
With whom we thought (beguiling hope!)
To stray together down Life's slope,
While Age came on like gentle rain.
They who but ceased their joyous strain—
Where may the limit to the sea
Of their bereaving silence be?
Yet sorrow not: we may prolong,
If not the singer's voice, the song.
And if beyond the glorious strife
Of this good world, I tread new life,
Reluctant, but, by Heaven's aid,
With infant instinct unafraid,

May Memory plead with thee to save
Out of my song its happier stave.
From the Dark Isthmus let not gloom
Deepen the shadows of thy room.
For me no ban of smile or jest:
Life at its full is holiest.
Let all thy days have pure employ
In the high sanity of joy;
Be then, as now, the friend of all,
Thy heart a thronged confessional,
A fount of sympathy, a store
Of jewels at an open door.

Here do I falter, love, for fear
Of sacrilege to what is dear.
Not now—not here; some luminous time,
Some perfect place, some fortunate rhyme
May yield that sacrificial part
That poets fitly give to Art.
Ever the moment most elate
Must for a speech sufficient wait;
Only the happiest know, alas!
How soundless is the brimming glass.

But, though Love need nor praise nor oath,
And silence oft is firmer troth,
Yet know that if I come no more,
'Tis fault of sail, or sea, or shore,
Not of the pilot,—for the heart
Sees its way homeward from the start.
If Death have bond that Love can break,
It shall be broken for thy sake.
If spirits unto mortals teach
Some rudiment of subtler speech,
My presence shall about thee stay
To prompt the word it cannot say.

So when, with late farewell and slow,
The guests into the night shall go,
Each pulse by sympathy more warm,
Forgetting the forgotten storm,
And thou alone into the blaze,
Thrilled with the best of life, shalt gaze
With hunger for the life divine,
Oh, be that blessed moment mine!—
With thee, who art my winter hour,
Book, picture, music, friend, and flower.

A SPRING PRELUDE

O TARDY April, is thy full choir here ?
The redbreast, picket of the swarming spring,
Whistles a sudden chirrup of alarm
Before his level flight ; and soft at eve
His melody, on grass half-robin high,
Falls like a vesper's throbbings from aloft.
The sparrow tempts the turf to faster growth
With her coy nesting, while her happy mate,
High in the promise-reddened maple-top,
O'er-bubbles with ecstasies of hoarded song.
The mellow tunings of the oriole's flute,
Rich as his coat, foretell his summer joy
And pitch the key of gladness for the year.
Here is the bluebird, best of mates and sires,
And pewee, restless as a lover's fear,
With cousin phœbe, bleating tearfully.
The humblebee, that, nectar-drunk, shall soon
Linger within the sybaritic flower,

Feeds his impatience at the cautious bud ;
And from the furrows' wet and windy reach,
Where March but lately swung his icy scythe, *spring*
Ripples the velvet air about the cheek,
Laden with faintest chorusings, as though
The brimming silence overflowed in sound.

O tardy April, is the full choir here ?
Alas for me ! thou hast forgot to bring
Out of the South one childish, bird-like voice,
Whose absence doth delay the year, and makes
My songs and thine but preludes till she come.

BEFORE THE BLOSSOM

IN the tassel-time of spring
Love 's the only song to sing;
 Ere the ranks of solid shade
Hide the bluebird's flitting wing,
 While in open forest glade
No mysterious sound or thing
 Haunt of green has found or made,
Love 's the only song to sing.

Though in May each bush be dressed
Like a bride, and every nest
 Learn Love's joyous repetend,
Yet the half-told tale is best
 At the budding,—with its end
Much too secret to be guessed,
 And its fancies that attend
April's passion unexpressed.

Love and Nature communing
Gave us Arcady. Still ring—

Vales across and groves among—
Wistful memories, echoing

Pan's far-off and fluty song.
Poet! nothing harsher sing;

Be, like Love and Nature, young
In the tassel-time of spring.

LOVE IN THE CALENDAR

WHEN chinks in April's windy dome
Let through a day of June,
And foot and thought incline to roam,
And every sound 's a tune;
When Nature fills a fuller cup,
And hides with green the gray,—
Then, lover, pluck your courage up
To try your fate in May.

Though proud she was as sunset clad
In Autumn's fruity shades,
Love too is proud, and brings (gay lad!)
Humility to maids.
Scorn not from nature's mood to learn,
Take counsel of the day:
Since haughty skies to tender turn,
Go try your fate in May.

Though cold she seemed as pearly light
Adown December eves,
And stern as night when March winds smite
The beech's lingering leaves;
Yet Love hath seasons like the year,
And grave will turn to gay,—
Then, lover, harken not to fear,
But try your fate in May.

And you whose art it is to hide
The constant love you feel:
Beware, lest overmuch of pride
Your happiness shall steal.
No longer pout, for May is here,
And hearts will have their way;
Love's in the calendar, my dear,
So yield to fate—and May!

A SEPTEMBER VIOLET

FOR days the peaks wore hoods of cloud,
The slopes were veiled in chilly rain;
We said: It is the Summer's shroud,
And with the brooks we moaned aloud,—
Will sunshine never come again?

At last the west wind brought us one
Serene, warm, cloudless, crystal day,
As though September, having blown
A blast of tempest, now had thrown
A gauntlet to the favored May.

Backward to Spring our fancies flew,
And, careless of the course of Time,
The bloomy days began anew.
Then, as a happy dream comes true,
Or as a poet finds his rhyme,—

Half wondered at, half unbeliev'd,—

I found thee, friendliest of the flowers!
Then Summer's joys came back, green-leav'd,
And its doomed dead, awhile reprieved,
First learned how truly they were ours.

Dear violet! Did the Autumn bring

Thee vernal dreams, till thou, like me,
Didst climb to thy imagining?
Or was it that the thoughtful Spring
Did come again, in search of thee?

SEPTEMBER'S EVE

I

'T is Nature's temple, and the day
Is full of worship as of light.
A sigh from now and 't will be night;
The lordly vision will not stay.
With dusky incense throbs the gray
Half dome of sky. A cloistered note
Of lingering bird-song sounds remote
As the last echo of a hymn
Sung in recessional, cold and dim.
I worship, but as though the praise
Must pass through Nature's priestly ways,
For God doth seem as lone and far
As yonder unaccompanied star,
September's Eve.

II

ALONG the mountain's altar crest
The russet deepens in the West,
As when to richer chords the close
Of noble music softly flows.
Now speed my footsteps through the dark,
I see my leaping hearth, and hark !
Th' expectant children's view-halloo
Rings out a melody of cheer.
The rushing feet approach ; I hear
The lavish welcome panting through.
How bright the sudden stars appear
In friendly groups ! Now God is near,
For Love is in *her* temple, too,
September's Eve.

OCTOBER

SOFT days whose silver moments keep
The constant promise of the morn,
When tired equinoctials sleep,
And wintry winds are yet unborn:
What one of all the twelve more dear—
Thou truce and Sabbath of the year?

More restful art thou than the May,
And if less hope be in thy hand,
Some cares 't were grief to understand
Thou hid'st, as is the mother's way,
With mists and lights of fairy-land
Set on the borders of the day.

And best of all thou dost beguile
With color,—friendliest thought of God!
Than thine hath heaven itself a smile
More rich? Are feet of angels shod
With peace more fair? O month divine!
Stay, till thy tranquil soul be mine.

IN NOVEMBER

HERE is the watershed of all the year,
Where, by a thought's space, thoughts do start anear
That fare most widely forth: some to the mouth
Of Arctic rivers, some to the mellow South.

The gaunt and wrinkled orchard shivers 'neath
The blast, like Lear upon the English heath,
And mossy boughs blow wild that, undistressed,
Another spring shall hide the cheerful nest.

All things are nearer from this chilly crown,—
The solitude, the white and huddling town;
And next the russet fields, of harvest shorn,
Shines the new wheat that freshens all the morn.

From out the bursting milkweed, dry and gray,
The silken argosies are launched away,
To mount the gust, or drift from hill to hill
And plant new colonies by road and rill.

Ah, wife of mine, whose clinging hand I hold,
Shrink you before the New, or at the Old?
And those far eyes that hold the silence fast—
Look they upon the Future, or the Past?

ON NEARING WASHINGTON

CITY of homes and in my heart my home!
(Though other streets exact a grudging fee):
How leap my pulses when afar I see
The dawn creep whitening down thy solemn dome!
For now my care-restricted steps may roam
Thy urban groves—a forest soon to be—
Where, like thy shining river, placid, free,
Contentment dwells and beckons me to come.

Ah, city dear to lovers!—that dost keep
For their delight what Mays and what Novem-
bers!—
Kindling the flame, and if it ever sleep,
New-lighting it within the breathing embers;
Dear even in their sorrow! for when they weep
'T is for rare joys, scarce known till Love remem-
bers.

"AS A BELL IN A CHIME"

As a bell in a chime
Sets its twin-note a-ringing,
As one poet's rhyme
Wakes another to singing,
So, once she has smiled,
All your thoughts are beguiled
And flowers and song from your childhood are bringing.

Though moving through sorrow
As the star through the night,
She needs not to borrow,
She lavishes, light.
The path of yon star
Seemeth dark but afar:
Like hers it is sure, and like hers it is bright.

Each grace is a jewel

Would ransom the town,

Her speech has no cruel,

Her praise is renown;

'T is in her as though Beauty,

Resigning to Duty

The scepter, had still kept the purple and crown.

IN THE DARK

At dusk, when Slumber's gentle wand
Beckons to quiet fields my boy,
And day, whose welcome was so fond,
Is slighted like a rivaled toy,—

When fain to follow, fain to stay,
Toward night's dim border-line he peers,
We say he fears the fading day:
Is it the inner dark he fears?

His deep eyes, made for wonder, keep
Their gaze upon some land unknown,
The while the crowding questions leap
That show his ignorance my own.

For he would go he knows not where,
And I—I hardly know the more;
Yet what is dark and what is fair
He would to-night with me explore.

Upon the shoals of my poor creed
His plummet falls, but cannot rest;
To sound the soundless is his need,
To find the primal soul his quest.

In vain these bird-like flutterings,
As when through cages sighs the wind:
My clearest answer only brings
New depths of mystery to his mind,—

Vague thoughts, by crude surmise beset,
And groping doubts that loom and pass
Like April clouds that, shifting, fret
With tides of shade the sun-wooded grass.

O lonely soul within the crowd
Of souls! O language-seeking cry!
How black were noon without a cloud
To vision only of the eye!

Sleep, child! while healing Nature breaks
Her ointment on the wounds of Thought;
Joy, that anew with morning wakes,
Shall bring you sight it ne'er has brought.

Lord, if there be, as wise men spake,
No Death, but only Fear of Death,
And when Thy temple seems to shake
'T is but the shaking of our breath,—

Whether by day or night we see
Clouds where Thy winds have driven none,
Let unto us as unto Thee
The darkness and the light be one.

GOOD MEASURE OF LOVE

ONE twilight was there when it seemed
New stars beneath young eyelids gleamed;

In vain the warning clock would creep
Anear the hour of beauty-sleep;

In vain the trundle yearned to hold
Far-Eyes and little Heart-of-Gold;

And love that kisses are the stuff of
At last for once there was enough of,

As though of all Affection's round
The fond climacteric had been found—

Each childish fancy heaping more,
Like spendthrift from a miser-store,

Till stopped by hug and stayed by kiss—
The sweet contention ran like this:

“How much do I love you?” (I remember but part
Of the words of the troth of this lover)

“I love you”—he said—“why—I love you—a heart
Brimful and running over.

“I love you a hundred!” said he, with a squeeze.

“A thousand!” said she, as she nestled;

“A million!” he cried in triumphant ease
While she with the numbers wrestled.

“Aha! I have found it!” she shouted, “aha!”
(The red to the soft cheeks mounting)

“I love you—I love you—I love you, Papa,
Over the last of the counting!”

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

WHAT is diviner than the peace of foes!

He conquers not who does not conquer hate,
Or thinks the shining wheels of heaven wait
On his forgiving. Dimmer the laurel shows
On brows that darken; and war-won repose
Is but a truce when heroes abdicate
To Huns—unfabling those of elder date
Whose every corse a fiercer warrior rose.

O ye that saved the land! Ah yes, and ye
That mourned its saving! Neither need forget
The price our destiny did of both demand—
Toil, want, wounds, prison, and the lonely sea
Of tears at home. Oh, look on these. And yet—
Before the human fail you—quick! your hand!

ON A CANDIDATE ACCUSED OF YOUTH*

"Too young" do they call him? Who say it? Not they
Who have felt his hard stroke in the civic affray,
When elders, whom veteran fighters had taught
Till they knew all the rules by which battles are fought,
Fumbled weakly with weapons his foresight had sought.

Who thinks of his youthfulness? Surely not they
Who stood at his side through the wavering day,
And knew the quick vision, the planning exact
Of parry and thrust, till the stout helmet cracked
'Neath the bold and true blow that is better than tact.

Yea, the strength of the arm is the strength of its use,
Not its years; and when fighting is on, better choose
Not the rust-eaten sword from the library wall,
But the new blade that leaps in its sheath at the call.
Ask 'the foe by which weapon he fears most to fall!

* Theodore Roosevelt, 1886.

WASHINGTON HYMN

SUNG AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE OF THE
WASHINGTON MEMORIAL ARCH, NEW YORK, MAY
30, 1890, TO THE AIR OF THE AUSTRIAN
HYMN BY HAYDN

PRAISE to Thee, O God of Freedom,
Praise to Thee, O God of Law,
Thee the goal of Israel's dreaming,
Thee the flame that Moses saw;
Light of every patriot dungeon,
Home of exile, hope of slave,
Loved by just and feared by tyrant,
Comrade of the true and brave.

Would we pray for new defenders,
Thou art with us ere we call;
Thou wilt find new ranks of heroes
For the heroes yet to fall.

Back we look across the ages,
Forward Thou beyond the sun,
Yet no greater gift we ask Thee
Than another Washington.

•

TO RALPH WALDO EMERSON

ON THE DEATH OF GARFIELD, SEPTEMBER, 1881

POET of every soul that grieves
O'er death untimely: whose lament
Lights up the farthest Dark, and leaves
A bow across the heavens bent:

Dead in an upper room doth lie
A nation's hero; can it be
Thy ear too faintly hears the cry
The West wind utters to the sea?

Thy Concord pæan may have caught
Glow from an elder Garfield's name:
What fitter aureole could be sought
For such a son than such a flame!

Bard of the Human: since we yearn
For that one manly heart in vain,
Forgive the reverent eyes that turn
Toward the low stream in Concord plain.

Warned by the favoring touch of Death,
Thy *Nunc Dimittis* thou hast sung;
No more the thunder's stormy breath
Shall sweep the lyre with lightnings strung.

And yet, for him, remains—unsigned,
Unspoken—all thy noble praise,
When (port more worth the cruise!) thou find
His sail beyond the final haze;

But us? O Seer, to whose gift
Looms large the Future's better part,
What other prophet voice shall lift
This burden from the people's heart!

ILLUSIONS

Go stand at night upon an ocean craft,
And watch the folds of its imperial train
Catching in fleecy foam a thousand glows —
A miracle of fire unquenched by sea.
There in bewildering turbulence of change
Whirls the whole firmament, till as you gaze,
All else unseen, it is as heaven itself
Had lost its poise, and each unanchored star
In phantom haste flees to the horizon line.

What dupes we are of the deceiving eye!
How many a light men wonderingly acclaim
Is but the phosphor of the path Life makes
With its own motion, while above, forgot,
Sweep on serene the old unenvious stars!

TO-MORROW

ONE walks secure in wisdom-trodden ways
That lead to peaceful nights through happy days—
Health, fame, friends, children, and a gentle wife,
All Youth can covet or Experience praise,
And Use withal to crown the ease of life.

Ah, thirsting for another day,

How dread the fear

If he but knew the danger near!

Another, with some old inheritance
Of Fate, unmitigated yet by Chance,—
Condemned by those he loves, with no appeal
To his own fearful heart, that ever pants
For newer circlings of the cruel Wheel!

Ah, thirsting for another day,

What need of fear

If he but knew the help that 's near?

INSCRIPTION FOR A BURIAL URN

FIRE is older than Earth,
Swaddled her at her birth,
Shall be her windy shroud.
Fear whispers, *Earth with fire endowed*
Is all of Life : but the Soul's Desire
Is something other than earth and fire,
And cannot mold or burn.
Of this is Honor made, and Truth,
And Love that shall out-light the star.
Go find when these began their youth,
Then guess their age's farthest bar ;
But look not for it in grave or urn.

QUALITY

I

TAKE, ere the bee hath sipped,
The courtly, maiden-lipped,
And dewy oleander,
And breathe, and dream, and wander.
But ah! take not another,
Lest fragrance fragrance smother.

II

What all your wreathèd wine
To what I taste of mine?
See the spilled jewels run,
Red as an autumn sun!—
Each holding warm and clear
The vintage of a year.

III

Stranger, thy passing word
My waiting heart hath stirred;
My life to thee I lend!
This hour thou art my friend,
And could not dearer be
Loved an eternity.

LUCK AND WORK

WHILE one will search the season over
To find the magic four-leaved clover,
Another, with not half the trouble,
Will plant a crop to bear him double.

ON A GREAT POET'S OBSCURITY

WHAT means his line? You say none knows?

Yet one perhaps may learn—in time:

For, sure, could Life be told in prose

There were no need at all for rhyme.

Alike two waters blunt the sight—

The muddy shallow and the sea;

Here every current leads aright

To deeps where lucent wonders be.

WRITTEN IN EMERSON'S POEMS

(FOR A CHILD)

MIDNIGHT or morning, eve or noon,
Torn March or clover-scented June,—
 Whene'er you stand before this gate,
'T will open—if but not too soon
 You knock, if only not too late.

Well shall it be if, boyhood gone,
A boy's delight you still may own
 To play the dawn-new game of life,—
If what is dreamed and what is known
 In your still-startled heart have strife.

Ere you have banished Mystery,
Or throned Distrust, or less shall be
 Stirred by the deep and fervent line
Which is the poet's sign and fee:
 Be this your joy that now is mine.

.

When comes the hour, be full and bright
Your lamp, as the wiser virgins' light!

Choose some familiar, shrine-like nook,
And offer up in prayer the night
Upon the altar of this book.

Always new earth, new heavens lie
The apocalyptic spirit nigh:

If such be yours, oh, while you can,
Bid unregretted Youth good-bye,
For morning shall proclaim you Man.

AMIEL

(THE "JOURNAL INTIME")

A FEW there are who to the troubled soul
Can lay the ear with that physician-art
Which by a whispered accent in the heart
Follows the lurking treason that hath stole
Into the citadel;—a few whose scroll
Of warning bears our safety,—is a chart
Of our unsounded seas, and doth impart
Courage to hold the spirit to its goal.

Of such is Amiel, lonely as a saint,—
Or as an eagle dwelling on peaks, in shade
Of clouds, which now he cleaves for one wide look
At the green earth, now for a circle faint
Nearer the sun. Once more has Truth betrayed
Secrets to Sorrow not in the sibyl's book.

"THE GUEST OF THE EVENING"

(READ AT THE DINNER TO RICHARD WATSON GILDER,
ON HIS BIRTHDAY FEBRUARY 8, 1884)

Good actions are a fruit so ripe and rare
They bear not fingering. Let me then beware
To touch with venturous hand this curving branch,
Nor lean too heedlessly against the tree
Thus, at its prime, o'erladen heavily
With golden harvest full and sweet and stanch,—
Lest I by some rude shock, at this light hour,
Bring down the Virtues in a mellow shower.

To drop the figure, friends,—let 's be content
The guest shall fancy less than we have meant;
Speak not too closely of his special good,
That we are here tells more than trumpets could.
Our friendship holds his virtues as the light
Holds the hid rainbow—storm but makes them bright;
The modest veil they wear I may not raise
Lest he should blush to hear, and I to praise.

SALVINI

“DEAD is old Greece,” they mourned ere yet arose
This Greek—this oak of old Achaian graft
Seed-sown where westward tempests wept and
laughed,
As now when some great gust of heaven blows
From lair levantine. How the giant grows!—
Not to lone ruin of a withered shaft,
But quaffing life in every leafy draught,—
Fathered by Storm and mothered by Repose.

Nay, doubt the Greeks are gone till, this green
crest
In splendor fallen, round the wrack shall be
Prolonged, like memories of a noble guest,
The phantom glory of the actor's day.
Then, musing on Olympus, men shall say
The myth of Jove took rise from lesser majesty.

FOR TEARS

SOME birches from the winter snow unbend,
And some lie prone the happy summer long:
Is grief but weakness? May it be, blithe friend,
The heavier burden stays but on the strong?

APPREHENSIONS

SEVEN days we sought the horizon line, elate,
Without a sea-born doubt of things to come;
Then on the eighth, upon the sill of home,
A fog, not of the sea, fell with a weight
Upon our spirits. Where was noon's rich freight
Of summer cheer, the darkness spoke of doom,
Till thoughts familiar did such dole assume
We could but cling before the coming fate.

In port—what greeting? From belovèd lips
The same "All 's well!" that could not charm
our woe
Chanted an ocean litany against harm;
Our happiness swung forth from fear's eclipse.
Alas! upon a fearless friend the blow
Fell like first lightning from long-gathered storm.

BROWNING AT ASOLO

(INSCRIBED TO HIS FRIEND MRS. ARTHUR BRONSON)

THIS is the loggia Browning loved,
 High on the flank of the friendly town;
These are the hills that his keen eye roved,
 The green like a cataract leaping down
 To the plain that his pen gave new renown.

There to the West what a range of blue!—
The very background Titian drew
 To his peerless Loves. O tranquil scene!
Who than thy poet fondlier knew
 The peaks and the shore and the lore between?

See! yonder 's his Venice—the valiant Spire,
 Highest one of the perfect three,
Guarding the others: the Palace choir,
The Temple flashing with opal fire—
 Bubble and foam of the sunlit sea.

Yesterday he was part of it all—
Sat here, discerning cloud from snow
In the flush of the Alpine afterglow,
Or mused on the vineyard whose wine-stirred row
Meets in a leafy bacchanal.

Listen a moment—how oft did he!—
To the bells from Fontalto's distant tower
Leading the evening in . . . ah, me!
Here breathes the whole soul of Italy
As one rose breathes with the breath of the bower.

Sighs were meant for an hour like this
When joy is keen as a thrust of pain.
Do you wonder the poet's heart should miss
This touch of rapture in Nature's kiss
And dream of Asolo ever again?

"Part of it yesterday," we moan?
Nay, he is part of it now, no fear.
What most we love we are that alone.
His body lies under the Minster stone,
But the love of the warm heart lingers here.

"LA MURA," ASOLO, June 3, 1892.

AT SEA

SOME things are undivined except by love—
Vague to the mind, but real to the heart,
As is the point of yon horizon line
Nearest the dear one on a foreign shore.

MOODS OF THE SOUL

I.—IN TIME OF VICTORY

As soldiers after fight confess
The fear their valor would not own
When, ere the battle's thunder stress,
The silence made its mightier moan:

Though now the victory be mine,
'T is of the conflict I must speak,
Still wondering how the Hand Divine
Confounds the mighty with the weak.

To-morrow I may flaunt the foe—
Not now; for in the echoing beat
Of fleeing heart-throbs well I know
The bitterness of near defeat.

O friends! who see but steadfast deeds,
Have grace of pity with your praise.
Crown if you must, but crown with weeds,—
The conquered more deserve your bays.

No, praise the dead!—the ancestral roll
That down their line new courage send,
For moments when against the soul
All hell and half of heaven contend.

II.—IN TIME OF DEFEAT

YES, here is undisguised defeat—
You say, “No further fight to lose.”
With colors in the dust, 't is meet
That tears should flow and looks accuse.

I echo every word of ruth
Or blame: yet have I lost the right
To praise with you the unfaltering Truth,
Whose power—save in me—has might?

Another day, another man:
I am not *now* what I have been;
Each grain that through the hour-glass ran
Rescued the sinner from his sin.

The Future is my constant friend;
Above all children born to her
Alike her rich affections bend—
She, the unchiding comforter.

Perhaps on her unsullied scroll
(Who knows?) there may be writ at last
A fairer record of the soul
For this dark blot upon the Past.

TO LEONORA

(AT HER DÉBUT, OCTOBER 18, 1891)

FAIR sister of the Muses, 't is the hour,
Dearest of all, when thou dost wed thy Art.
No bride more radiant a more single heart
Gave to her chosen—and what noble dower!
Graces akin to forest and to flower;
A spirit blithe as dawn; a soul astart;
A nature rich, to keep thee what thou art—
A star of beauty and a flame of power.

Now, while the trancèd throng turn each to each
Sharing their joy, think'st thou on those young years
When many a day and night was unbeguiled
Save by this love that lightened toil and tears?
Thy music melts upon the verge of speech;
Fame greets the artist—I, the constant child.

HERBERT MAPES

(DROWNED AUGUST 23, 1891)

LAST night, what kingdom on his brow!
What mellow music in his voice!
What strength to make the eye rejoice!
What life! what flush of youth! . . . and now!

O brow dethroned! O muffled bell
Of speech! O net too loosely wove!
O sunken freight of hope and love!
Come back till we have said farewell!

A WISH FOR NEW FRANCE

(FRAGMENT)

FOR her no backward look
Into the bloody book
Of kings. Thrice-rescued land!
Her haunted graves bespeak
A nobler fate: to seek
In service of the world again the world's command.

She, in whose skies of peace
Arise new auguries
To strengthen, cheer, and guide—
When nations in a horde
Draw the unhallowed sword,
O Memory, walk a warning specter at her side!

DIVIDED HONORS*

NATURE had late a strife with Art
To prove which bears the worthier part
In poets' fame. The words ran high
While Justice, friend to both, stood by
To name the victor.

Nature rose,
Impressive in her artless pose,
And in a few words fitly chose
(Confined to generalities)
Pleaded the *nature* of the thing—
That singers born to sing *must sing*,
That it could not be otherwise;
Spoke of the poet's "flight of wing,"
His "flow of song," his "zephyr sighs,"
And hid in trope and allegory
A whole campaign of *a priori*.

Then Art began to plead *her* cause;
Said Nature's windy words had flaws—

* Written for the dinner to James Whitcomb Riley at Indianapolis, October 18, 1888.

That e'en the larklet soaring high
Must surely once have *learned* to fly
And eke to sing. Moreover, Song
Is something more than baby-prattle;
Or plow-boy's carol to the cattle;
Or love's acrostic—though it be
Faultless (at one extremity);
Or verse that school-girls spoil a day for,
Found good to print, but not to pay for.
This well she with herself debated,
And, lacking points, elaborated,
And, like a lawyer closely pressed,
Naught having proved, assumed the rest.

But Justice, knowing how to prick
The airy globes of rhetoric,
Said, "Friends, your theories are ample,
Yet light upon the case we need,
And, *me judice*, she 'll succeed
Who shall present the best example."

A moment both were still as death,
Then shouted "Shakespeare!" in a breath;

And then, confounded by each other
(While pondering moderated pother),
Ran down the list of English charmers,
As in a fugue of two performers:
'T was "Chaucer!" "Philip Sidney!" "Donne!"
"George Herbert!" "Milton!" "Tennyson!"
And, quick as either one would name them,
The other would be sure to claim them!—
Till Justice—blindfold all these years
Because she can't believe her eyes—
Convinced that hearing, too, belies,
Now pulled her bandage o'er her ears.
Then Nature, in affected candor,
Renounced all ownership in Landor,
And said: "Let's both make fair returns;
I'll give you Keats—you give me Burns."
"No, no," said Art, "you *have* a fit man,—
Your whole contention lies in Whitman."
Then, she not wanting from her rival
A gift of what was hers by right,
At once there followed a revival
Of acrimony—till in fright
Pale Justice, with a sly suggestion
Of dining, moved the previous question.

But Nature, conscious of her force,
 Had in reserve a shrewd resource,
 And, while the judgment hung uncertain,
 She quickly drew aside a curtain,
 And, full of confidence, said dryly:
 "I rest my case on Whitcomb Riley!
 And further to enforce my right,
 He has consented to recite,
 That all may see by how large part
 He has possession of my heart."

.

Five minutes! and the wager's o'er:
 A ballad, homely, simple, true —
 And then, and ever after, you
 See Nature as you'd ne'er before.
 First is the kind eye's twinkling ray
 So lit with human sympathy
 That, kindled by its flash, you say
 Humor's the true democracy.
 The next note's deeper—there's no guile
 Mixed with the shrewdness of that smile
 That breaks from sadness into joy—
 The man's glad memory of the boy.

Then tears, ah! they are Nature's rain,
The tears of love and death and grief
And rapture—the divine relief
That gives us back the sun again.

.

No more need Nature nurse her fears,
For look! e'en Art herself 's in tears,
And in the general acclaim
The jade has nigh forgot her name.
Yet has she left one arrow more,
And, proudly rising to the floor,
"Not yet," she says, "for what you take
For Nature's work is mine, who make
Jewels of stones that else would lie
Unnoticed 'neath the searching sky.
Receive the secret—mine your tears:
He's been my pupil fifteen years!"

Then Justice said: "Since there's no winner,
'T is fair the two should pay a dinner;
Nature shall furnish, Art prepare it,
And Riley, and his friends, shall share it."

A TRACER FOR J*** B*****

I

DEAR ENGLISH COUSINS : We have lost—
And crave your help to find him—
A farmer-poet, ocean-tossed,
With no address behind him.

Yes, though of song he write no stave,
We yet will call him poet :
His lines, as wave with following wave,
Make rhythm and never know it.

His pages grow rare fruits of thought,
Rare fruits of toil his furrows ;
His name ? Why hide it when you 've caught
The rhyme I seek ?—John Burroughs.

I doubt if in the London round
His eager feet will loiter,
While hedge and copse of Kentish ground
Are left to reconnoiter.

There he 'll compare, in lulls of rain,
Your thrushes with our cat-bird,
And quiz the lads in every lane
For news of this or that bird.

Him leaners over Stratford gates
Shall mark, by Avon strolling.
A poacher? Ay, but on estates
Not near their vision rolling.

When Shakespeare tribute he has brought
Across the loyal ocean,
He 'll seek some haunt that Wordsworth sought
To pay his next devotion.

His "next"—ah! rather say his *first*,
Since friend is more than sovereign;
Of poets be the truth rehearsed:
To reign is not to govern.

To him the moor shall not be lone,
Nor any footstep idle
Where Nature hoards each lingering tone
Of the human voice of Rydal.

By poets led, he will not grope,
But be, from Kent to Cumberland,
At home as on his Hudson slope
Or Rip Van Winkle's slumberland.

II

How shall you know him?—by what word,
What shibboleth, what mole-ridge?—
Him who will find an English bird
Just by a line of Coleridge?

Of outward mark the quickest test
Is that he wears the shading
That sober Autumn loves the best—
Soft gray through iron fading.

Tinged, too, are beard and hair; and keen
His eye, but warm and witty;
A rustic strength is in his mien,
Made mild by love and pity.

A man of grave, of jolly moods,
That with the world has kept tune —
You 'd call him Druid in the woods,
And in the billows Neptune.

Another sign that will not fail:
Where'er he chance to tarry,—
In copse, or glen, or velvet vale,
Or where the streamlets marry,

Or on the peaks whose shadows spread
O'er Grasmere's level reaches,—
You 'll note shy shakings of his head
Before his Saxon speeches.

III

AH me! by how poor facts and few
A stranger may detect us,
While friends may never find the clew,
Though keenly they inspect us.

Of things that make the *man*—alack!

I 've hardly even hinted;

We speak of them—behind his back,

But here?—this might be printed.

Still . . . he 'd not know the portrait his—

His modesty so blinds him—

But no! . . . to learn what Burroughs *is*

Shall be his fee who finds him.

II

SONGS OF LIBERTY

AND OTHER POEMS

TO MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN



APOSTROPHE TO GREECE *

FROM THE PARTHENON

(INSCRIBED TO THE GREEK PEOPLE ON THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE)

I

O LAND of sage and stoic—
Of human deeds heroic,
Of heroes' deeds divine!
What braggart of the nations
Shall scorn thy proud narrations—
Thou who hast named the stars from thy Olympian line!

* This ode, begun on the steps of the Parthenon in 1886, was published in the New York "Independent" of April, 1896, and, in part, in modern Greek in the "Hellas," a record of the Olympic Games of that year.

In spite of Moslem crime
Thou livest! Hungry Time
Can but the dead devour.
Though asphodel hath strewed
This marble solitude,
The silence thrills with life, the ruins rise in power.

Yon sea's imperial vastness
Was once thy friend and fastness;
By many a curving strand,
'Twixt purple capes, on edges
Of seaward-looking ledges,
Rose the white cities sown by thy adventurous hand.

Nor couldst thou think of these
As lonely colonies
Wherewith rich Corinth lined
The West, while Dorian sails
Outrode Ægean gales;
Nay, suburbs were they all, molds of Athenian mind.

Then could thy galleys pass
From Tyre to Acragas,
By Grecian islands gray
That dreamed of Athens' brow,
And gaily to the prow
Harnessed the pawing winds to seek some Attic bay.

Here to Athene's feast,
From West, from North, from East—
 Through Jason's fabled strait
Or round Malea's rock—
The homesick sails would flock,
Oft with an Odyssey of peril to relate.

And what exultant stir
When the swart islander,
 Bound for the festal week,
First saw Colonna's crest
Give back the glowing West
Far past Ægina's shore and her prophetic peak!

I hear his cheery cries
Though Time between us lies
 More wide than sea and land.
The gladness that he brings
Thrills in the song he sings,
Beaching his welcome craft on Phaleron's level strand.

O harbor of delight!
Strike the torn sail—to-night
 On Attic soil again!
When joy is free to slaves
What though the swarming waves
Follow each other down like the generations of men!

Now, for a time, to war
And private hate a bar
Of sacred armistice ;
Even in the under-world
Shall the rough winds be furled
That tell of wrangling shades that crowd the courts of Dis.

'T is Peace shall bring the green
For Merit's brow. What scene,
O Athens, shall be thine!
Till from Parnassus' height
Phœbus' reluctant light
Lingers along Hymettus' fair and lofty line.

With dance and song and game
And oratory's flame
Shall Hellas beat and swell,
Till, olive-crowned, in pride
The envied victors ride,
Fellows to those whose fame the prancing marbles tell.

O antique time and style,
Return to us awhile
Bright as thy happy skies!
Silent the sounds that mar :
Like music heard afar
The harmony endures while all the discord dies.

Not yet the cloister-shade
Fell on a world afraid,
 Morbid, morose—the alloy
Found greater than the gold
Of life. Like Nature old
Thou still didst sing and show the sanity of joy.
Thine is that wisdom yet
That Age from Youth must get,
 Age pay to Youth in kind.
Oh, teach our anxious days
Through thy serener ways
How by the happy heart to keep the unclouded mind.

II

BUT thou wert Freedom's too
As well as Joy's. She drew
 From every mountain breast
An air that could endure
No foreign foe—so pure
That Lycabettus neighbors the Corinthian crest.
Nor was thy love of life
For thee alone. Thy strife
 Was for the race, no less.
Thee, to whom wrong is done
While wrong confronts the sun,
The oppressor cannot crush, nor teach thee to oppress.

By thee for lands benighted
Was Freedom's beacon lighted
That now enstars the earth.
Welcome the people's hour!
Passed is the monarch's power,
Dread waits not on his death that trembled at his birth.

As down a craggy steep
Albanian torrents leap
Impetuous to the sea—
Such was thy ancient spirit,
Still thine. Who that inherit
Hatred of tyranny inherit not from thee?

Look to the West and see
Thy daughter, Italy—
Fathered by Neptune bold
On Cumæ's sheltered strand
(Forgot but for the hand
That saved to Art her sibyl many-named and old);

That temple-sated soil,
Whose altar-smoke would coil
To hide the Avernian steep,
Grows the same harvest now—
Best increase of the plow,
Fair Freedom, of thy seed, sown for the world to reap.

Though regal Rome display
 The triumphs of her day ;
 Though Florence, laurel-hung,
 Tell how she held the van
 In the slow march of man—
 Greek was the path they trod, Greek was the song they sung.

Look farther west and there
 Behold thy later heir,
 Child of thy Jove-like mind—
 Fair France. How hath she kept
 The watch while others slept?
 Hath Wisdom hastened on while Justice lagged behind?

Like thee, full well she knows
 Through what maternal throes
 New forms from olden come ;
 Her arts, her temples, speak
 A glory that is Greek,
 And filially her heart turns to the ancestral home.

For her no backward look
 Into the bloody book
 Of kings. Thrice-rescued land!
 Her furrowed graves bespeak
 A nobler fate : to seek
 In service of the world again the world's command.

She in whose skies of peace
Arise new auguries
 To strengthen, cheer, and guide—
When nations in a horde
 Draw the unhallowed sword,
O Memory, walk, a warning specter, at her side!

Among thy debtor lands,
See, grateful England stands;
 Who at thy ranging feet
Learned how to carry Law
 Into the jungle's maw,
And tempers unto Man or cold or desert heat.

All that thou daredst she dares
Till now thy name she bears—
 Mother of Colonies.
What if thy glorious Past
She should restore at last,
And clothe in new renown the dream of Pericles!

If she but lean to thee
Once more thy North shall be
 Uplifted from the dust.
Mother of noble men,
Thy friends of sword and pen,
England, though slow to justice, shall again be just.

And now from our new land
 Beyond two seas, a hand!
 Our world, for ages dumb,
 Part of thy fable-lore,
 Gathers upon her shore
 Each dying race as soil for one chief race to come.
 But of our beating heart
 Thy pulse how large a part!
 Our wider sky but bounds
 Another Grecian dawn.
 Lament not what is gone;
 Pentelicus grieves not, for Fame hath healed his wounds.

III

THEN, Hellas! scorn the sneer
 Of kings who will not hear
 Their people's moaning voice,
 More deaf than shore to sea!
 The world hath need of thee—
 The world thou still canst teach to reason and rejoice.
 Yes, need of thee while Art
 Of life is but a part—
 Plaything or luxury.
 Greek soil perchance may show
 Where Art's hid stream doth flow—
 To rise, a new Alpheus, near another sea.

Yes, need of thee while Gold
Makes timid traitors bold
 To lay republics low ;
Not ignorant nor poor
Spread for their feet the lure—
The kind, the loved, the honored, aim the brutal blow.

Yes, need of thee while Earth
Each day shows Heaven a girth
 Of want and misery ;
Wherein there is not found
Beyond thy happy bound
A people brave, sane, temperate, thrifty, chaste, and free.

Then, though by faction's blunder,
And boasts, of mimic thunder,
 Again thou art betrayed,
Vain this, vain every treason ;
With thee are Hope and Reason,
Nor Past can be forgot, nor Future long delayed.

Troy was, but Athens is—
The World's and Liberty's,
 Nor ever less shall be!
Though fallen are old fanes
The vestal fire remains
Bright with the light serene of immortality.

SONG OF THE MODERN GREEKS

LIBERTY, beloved of Hellas,
Lend us once again thy sword ;
Turn thy glorious eyes that tell us
Thou art still to be adored.

Hail thee, spirit! hover over
Salamis and Marathon,
Till each corse that called thee lover
Rise with thee to lead us on.

Slumbered Hellas long in sadness,
Waiting thee to call her forth ;
Hushed the very cradle's gladness
By the tyrant of the North.

Long she dwelt with buried heroes
In the fame of other years ;
But against a horde of Neros
What availed or pride or tears ?

Then at last thy summons called us,
And as one we followed thee,
Till the rusted chains that thrall'd us
Fell, and Greece once more was free.

Ah, but while our kin are weeping
Over sea and over land,
Let us not again be sleeping,
Wake us with thy warning hand.

Though the Moslem swarm to slay us,
Though false friends, within, without—
Kings or cowards—shall betray us,
If thou lead us, who shall doubt?

Greece's blood made many an altar
For the nations then unborn;
Will they with her peril palter—
Give her gratitude, or scorn?

Oh, could Earth and Time assemble
All thy legions, Liberty,
At their tread the world would tremble
With the passion to be free.

TO THE HOUSATONIC AT STOCKBRIDGE

CONTENTED river! in thy dreamy realm—
The cloudy willow and the plummy elm:
They call thee English, thinking thus to mate
Their musing streams that, oft with pause sedate,
Linger through misty meadows for a glance
At haunted tower or turret of romance.
Beware their praise who rashly would deny
To our New World its true tranquillity.
Our "New World"? Nay, say rather to our Old
(Let truth and freedom make us doubly bold);
Tell them: A thousand silent years before
Their sea-born isle—at every virgin shore
Dripping like Aphrodite's tresses—rose,
Here, 'neath her purple veil, deep slept Repose,
To be awakened but by wail of war.
About thy cradle under yonder hill,
Before thou knewest bridge, or dam, or mill,
Soft winds of starlight whispered heavenly lore,
Which, like our childhood's, all the workday toil
Cannot efface, nor long its beauty soil.
Thou hast grown human laboring with men
At wheel and spindle; sorrow thou dost ken;

Yet dost thou still the unshaken stars behold,
Calm to their calm returning, as of old.
Thus, like a gentle nature that grows strong
In meditation for the strife with wrong,
Thou show'st the peace that only tumult can;
Surely, serener river never ran.

Thou beautiful! From every dreamy hili
What eye but wanders with thee at thy will,
Imagining thy silver course unseen
Convoyed by two attendant streams of green
In bending lines,—like half-expected swerves
Of swaying music, or those perfect curves
We call the robin; making harmony
With many a new-found treasure of the eye:
With meadows, marging smoothly rounded hills
Where Nature teemingly the myth fulfils
Of many-breasted Plenty; with the blue,
That to the zenith fades through triple hue,
Pledge of the constant day; with clouds of white,
That haunt horizons with their blooms of light,
And when the east with rosy eve is glowing
Seem like full cheeks of zephyrs gently blowing.

Contented river! and yet over-shy
To mask thy beauty from the eager eye;

Hast thou a thought to hide from field and town?
In some deep current of the sunlit brown
Art thou disquieted—still discontent
With praise from thy Homeric bard, who lent
The world the placidness thou gavest him?
Thee Bryant loved when life was at its brim;
And when the wine was falling, in thy wood
Of sturdy willows like a Druid stood.
Oh, for his touch on this o'er-throbbing time,
His hand upon the hectic brow of Rhyme,
Cooling its fevered passion to a pace
To lead, to stir, to reinspire the race!

.
Ah! there's a restive ripple, and the swift
Red leaves—September's firstlings—faster drift;
Betwixt twin aisles of prayer they seem to pass
(One green, one greenly mirrored in thy glass).
Wouldst thou away, dear stream? Come, whisper near!
I also of much resting have a fear:
Let me to-morrow thy companion be
By fall and shallow to the adventurous sea!

FAREWELL TO ITALY

WE lingered at Domo d'Ossola—
Like a last, reluctant guest—
Where the gray-green tide of Italy
Flows up to a snowy crest.

The world from that Alpine shoulder
Yearns toward the Lombard plain—
The hearts that come, with rapture,
The hearts that go, with pain.

Afar were the frets of Milan ;
Below, the enchanted lakes ;
And—*was* it the mist of the evening,
Or the mist that the memory makes ?

We gave to the pale horizon
The Naples that evening gives ;
We reckoned where Rome lies buried,
And we felt where Florence lives.

And as Hope bends low at parting
For a death-remembered tone,
We searched the land that Beauty
And Love have made their own.

We would take of her hair some ringlet,
Some keepsake from her breast,
And catch of her plaintive music
The strain that is tenderest.

So we strolled in the yellow gloaming
(Our speech with musing still)
Till the noise of the militant village
Fell faint on Calvary Hill.

And scarcely our mood was broken
Of near-impending loss
To find at the bend of the pathway
A station of the Cross.

And up through the green aisle climbing
(Each shrine like a counted bead),
We heard from above the swaying
And mystical chant of the creed.

Then the dead seemed the only living,
And the real seemed the wraith,

And we yielded ourselves to the vision
We saw with the eye of Faith.

Then she said, "Let us go no farther :
'T is fit that we make farewell
While forest and lake and mountain
Are under the vesper spell."

As we rested, the leafy silence
Broke like a cloud at play,
And a browned and burdened woman
Passed, singing, down the way.

'T was a song of health and labor,—
Of childlike gladness, blent
With the patience of the toiler
That tyrants call content.

"Nay, this is the word we have waited,"
I said, "that a year and a sea
From now, in our doom of exile,
Shall echo of Italy."

Just then what a burst from the bosquet—
As a bird might have found its soul !
And each by the halt of the heart-throb
Knew 't was the rossignol.

Then we drew to each other nearer
And drank at the gray wall's verge
The sad, sweet song of lovers,—
Their passion and their dirge.

And the carol of Toil below us
And the pæan of Prayer above
Were naught to the song of Sorrow,
For under the sorrow was Love.

.

Alas ! for the dear remembrance
We chose for an amulet :
The one that is left to keep it—
Ah ! how can he forget ?

A CHOPIN FANTASY

ON REMEMBRANCE OF A PRÉLUDE

COME, love, sit here and let us leave awhile
This custom-laden world for warmer lands
Where, 'neath the silken net of afternoon,
Leisure is duty and dread care a dream.

(The music begins)

That cliff 's Minorca, that horizon Spain.
There in the west, like fragrance visible,
Rises the soft light as the sun goes down
Till half the sky is palpitant with gold.
Follow it eastward to the gentle blue,
With faith and childhood in it, and the peace
Men agonize and roam for. See that fleet
That flutters in the breeze from the Camargue
Like white doves, huddled now, now scattering.
(They say all native boats are homeward bound
Against to-morrow's annual festival.)
What rest there is in looking from this height

On palms and olives, and the easy steps
By which the terrace clambers yonder hill!
How dark those hollows whence the roads of white
Ascend in angles to the high-perched town!
Needless the music of the convent bell:
'Tis vespers in the heart as in the air.
This is the hour for love, that, like the breath
Of yonder orange, sweetest is at eve.
Here, safe entwined, what could be wished for two
Hid in an island hidden in the sea?
Now let me lay my head upon your lap,
And place your rose-leaf fingers on my lids,
Lest, catching glimpse of your resplendent eyes,
My ardor should blaspheme the coming stars!

.
How fast it darkens! One must needs be blind
To know the twilight softness of your voice.
And Love,—not blind, but with a curtained sight,—
Like one who dwells with Sorrow, can discern
The shading of a shadow in a tone.
There's something troubles you, my sweet-of-hearts,
A hesitance in that caressing word;
Nothing unhappy—a presentiment
Such as from far might thrill the under-depths
Of some still tranquil lake before a storm.
Be happy, love, not ponder happiness.

Unerringly I know your woman's soul,
Content to have your happiness put off
Like well-planned feast against to-morrow's need,
And more enjoyed in planning than in use.
But oh, we men, God made us—what was that?
A drop upon your hand? Perhaps a tear
Lost by an angel who remembers yet
Some perfect moment of th' imperfect world,
And goes reluctantly her way to heaven,
Still envious of our lot? Another drop!
Why, 't is the rain. Stand here and see that sky—
Blackness intense as sunlight. What a chasm
Of silver where that lightning tore its way!
That crash was nearer! Here 's our shelter—quick!
Now it 's upon us! Half a breath, and—there!
No wonder you should tremble when the earth
Sways thus and all the firmament 's a-reel.
Tremble, but fear not—Love created Fear
To drive men back to Love, where you are now.
What rhythmic terror in the tideless sea
That wildly seeks the refuge of the rocks
From unknown dangers (dangers known are none)!
God! did you see within the headland's jaws
That drifting sail? Wait the next flash and—look!
Oh, heaven! to cruise about a hundred coasts,
Safe past the fabled monsters of the deep,

To break supinely on familiar shoals
Where one in childhood dug a mimic grave!

.

Thank God for those few, momentary stars,
And that slow-lifting zone of topaz light,
Like parting guest returning with a smile.
We care not now that the insatiate storm
Plunges with leaps of thunder on the east.

(The music ceases)

Give me thy hand, dear one, though unto pain
I crush it to be sure that this be dream,
Knowing 't was Death that passed, and oh, how
near!

IN TESLA'S LABORATORY

HERE in the dark what ghostly figures press ! —
No phantom of the Past, or grim or sad ;
No wailing spirit of woe ; no specter, clad
In white and wandering cloud, whose dumb distress
Is that its crime it never may confess ;
No shape from the strewn sea ; nor they that add
The link of Life and Death,—the tearless mad,
That live nor die in dreary nothingness :

But blessèd spirits waiting to be born—
Thoughts to unlock the fettering chains of Things ;
The Better Time ; the Universal Good.
Their smile is like the joyous break of morn ;
How fair, how near, how wistfully they brood !
Listen ! that murmur is of angels' wings.

THE WISTFUL DAYS

WHAT is there wanting in the Spring ?

The air is soft as yesteryear ;

The happy-nested green is here,

And half the world is on the wing.

The morning beckons, and like balm

Are westward waters blue and calm.

Yet something's wanting in the Spring.

What is it wanting in the Spring ?

O April, lover to us all,

What is so poignant in thy thrall

When children's merry voices ring ?

What haunts us in the cooing dove

More subtle than the speech of Love,

What nameless lack or loss of Spring?

Let Youth go dally with the Spring,

Call her the dear, the fair, the young ;

And all her graces ever sung

Let him, once more rehearsing, sing.

They know, who keep a broken tryst,

Till something from the Spring be missed

We have not truly known the Spring.

"LOVE ONCE WAS LIKE AN APRIL DAWN"

Love once was like an April dawn :
Song throbbed within the heart by rote,
And every tint of rose or fawn
Was greeted by a joyous note.
How eager was my thought to see
Into that morning mystery !

Love now is like an August noon,
No spot is empty of its shine ;
The sun makes silence seem a boon,
And not a voice so dumb as mine.
Yet with what words I'd welcome thee—
Couldst thou return, dear mystery !

AN IRISH LOVE-SONG

In the years about twenty
(When kisses are plenty)
The love of an Irish lass fell to my fate —
 So winsome and sightly,
 So saucy and sprightly,
The priest was a prophet that christened her Kate.

 Soft gray of the dawning,
 Bright blue of the morning,
The sweet of her eye there was nothing to mate;
 A nose like a fairy's,
 A cheek like a cherry's,
And a smile—well, her smile was like—nothing but Kate.

 To see her was passion,
 To love her, the fashion;
What wonder my heart was unwilling to wait!
 And, daring to love her,
 I soon did discover
A Katharine masking as mischievous Kate.

No Katy unruly,
But Katharine, truly—
Fond, serious, patient, and even sedate;
With a glow in her gladness
That banishes sadness—
Yet stay ! Should I credit the sunshine to *Kate* ?

Love cannot outlive it,
Wealth cannot o'ergive it—
That saucy surrender she made at the gate.
O Time, be but human,
Spare the girl in the woman !
You gave me my Katharine—leave me my Kate !

"OH, WASTE NO TEARS"

OH, waste no tears on Pain or Fate,
Nor yet at Sorrow's dire demand ;
Think not to drown Regret with weight
Of weeping, as the sea the strand ;
When was Death's victory less elate
That Grief o'er-sobbed his grasping hand ?

Not for the flaws of life shall fall
The tear most exquisite—ah, no ;
But for its fine perfections all :
For morning's joyous overflow,
For sunset's fleeting festival,
And what midwinter moons may show ;

For wild-rose breath of Keats's line ;
For Titian's rivalry of June ;
For Chopin's tender notes that twine
The sense in one autumnal tune ;
For Brunelleschi's dome divine,
In wonder planned, with worship hewn.

Save them for heroes—not their blood,
But for the generous vow it sealed;
For babes, when mothers say, "This bud
Will be the blossom of the field";
For women, when to Vengeance' flood
They hold for Guilt a stainless shield.

And when two hearts have closer come,
Through doubts and mysteries and fears,
Till in one look's delirium
At last the happy truth appears,
When words are weak and music dumb
Then perfect love shall speak in tears.

HER SMILE

THE odor is the rose ;

 The smile, the woman.

Delights the bud doth sheathe,

Unfolded, all may breathe.

So joys that none could know

Her smiles on all bestow,

 As though a rose were happy to be human!

SONG FOR THE GUITAR

I GRIEVE to see these tears—
Long strangers to thine eye—
These jewels that fond years
For me could never buy.
Weep, weep, and give thy heart relief.
I grieve, but 't is not for thy grief:

Not for these tears—they were
Another's ere they fell—
But those that never stir
The fountain where they dwell.
I 'd smile, though thou shouldst weep a sea,
Were but a single tear for me !

URSULA

I SEE her in the festal warmth to-night,
Her rest all grace, her motion all delight.
Endowed with all the woman's arts that please,
In her soft gown she seems a thing of ease,
Whom sorrow may not reach or evil blight.

To-morrow she will toil from floor to floor
To smile upon the unreplying poor,
To stay the tears of widows, and to be
Confessor to men's erring hearts . . . ah me !
She knows not I am beggar at her door.

A DARK DAY

GLOOM of a leaden sky
Too heavy for hope to move ;
Grief in my heart to vie
With the dark distress above ;
Yet happy, happy am I—
For I sorrow with her I love.

THE SURPRISED AVOWAL

WHEN one word is spoken,
 When one look you see,
When you take the token,
 Howe'er so slight it be,
The cage's bolt is broken,
 The happy bird is free.

There is no unsaying
 That love-startled word;
It were idle praying
 It no more be heard;
Yet, its law obeying,
 Who shall blame the bird?

What avails the mending
 Where the cage was weak?
What avails the sending
 Far, the bird to seek,
When every cloud is lending
 Wings toward yonder peak?

Thrush, could they recapture
You to newer wrong,
How could you adapt your
Strain to suit the throng?
Gone would be the rapture
Of unimprisoned song.

THE BLOSSOM OF THE SOUL

Thou half-unfolded flower
With fragrance-laden heart,
What is the secret power
That doth thy petals part?
What gave thee most thy hue—
The sunshine, or the dew?

Thou wonder-wakened soul!
As Dawn doth steal on Night
On thee soft Love hath stole.
Thine eye, that blooms with light,
What makes its charm so new—
Its sunshine, or its dew?

"I JOURNEYED SOUTH TO MEET THE
SPRING "

I JOURNEYED South to meet the Spring,
To feel the soft tide's gentle rise
That to my heart again should bring,
Foretold by many a whispering wing,
The old, the new, the sweet surprise.

For once, the wonder was not new—
And yet it wore a newer grace:
For all its innocence of hue,
Its warmth and bloom and dream and dew,
I had but left—in Helen's face.

PARAPHRASES FROM THE SERVIAN
OF
ZMAI IOVAN IOVANOVICH
AFTER LITERAL TRANSLATIONS
BY
NIKOLA TESLA

Attention is called to the fact that since the publication, in 1897, of this introductory note by Mr. Tesla, both Zmai and his hero, Luka Filipov, have died.



INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY

MR. TESLA

ZMAI IOVAN IOVANOVICH

THE CHIEF SERVIAN POET OF TO-DAY

HARDLY is there a nation which has met with a sadder fate than the Servian. From the height of its splendor, when the empire embraced almost the entire northern part of the Balkan peninsula and a large portion of the territory now belonging to Austria, the Servian nation was plunged into abject slavery, after the fatal battle of 1389 at the Kosovo Polje, against the overwhelming Asiatic hordes. Europe can never repay the great debt it owes to the Servians for checking, by the sacrifice of their own liberty, that barbarian influx. The Poles at Vienna, under Sobieski, finished what the Servians attempted, and were similarly rewarded for their service to civilization.

It was at the Kosovo Polje that Milosh Obilich, the noblest of Servian heroes, fell, after killing the Sultan Murat II. in the very midst of his great army. Were it not that it is an historical fact, one would be apt to consider this episode a myth, evolved by contact with the Greek and Latin races. For in Milosh we see both

Leonidas and Mucius, and, more than this, a martyr, for he does not die an easy death on the battle-field like the Greek, but pays for his daring deed with a death of fearful torture. It is not astonishing that the poetry of a nation capable of producing such heroes should be pervaded with a spirit of nobility and chivalry. Even the indomitable Marko Kraljevic, the later incarnation of Servian heroism, when vanquishing Musa, the Moslem chief, exclaims, "Woe unto me, for I have killed a better man than myself!"

From that fatal battle until a recent period, it has been black night for the Servians, with but a single star in the firmament—Montenegro. In this gloom there was no hope for science, commerce, art, or industry. What could they do, this brave people, save to keep up the weary fight against the oppressor? And this they did unceasingly, though the odds were twenty to one. Yet fighting merely satisfied their wilder instincts. There was one more thing they could do, and did: the noble feats of their ancestors, the brave deeds of those who fell in the struggle for liberty, they embodied in immortal song. Thus circumstances and innate qualities made the Servians a nation of thinkers and poets, and thus, gradually, were evolved their magnificent national poems, which were first collected by their most prolific writer, Vuk Stefanovich Karajich, who also compiled the first dictionary of the Servian tongue, containing more than sixty thousand words. These national poems Goethe considered fit to match the finest productions of the Greeks and Romans. What would he have thought of them had he been a Servian?

While the Servians have been distinguished in national

poetry, they have also had many individual poets who attained greatness. Of contemporaries there is none who has grown so dear to the younger generation as Zmai Iovan Iovanovich. He was born in Novi Sad (Neusatz), a city at the southern border of Hungary, on November 24, 1833. He comes from an old and noble family, which is related to the Servian royal house. In his earliest childhood he showed a great desire to learn by heart the Servian national songs which were recited to him, and even as a child he began to compose poems. His father, who was a highly cultivated and wealthy gentleman, gave him his first education in his native city. After this he went to Budapest, Prague, and Vienna, and in these cities he finished his studies in law. This was the wish of his father, but his own inclinations prompted him to take up the study of medicine. He then returned to his native city, where a prominent official position was offered him, which he accepted; but so strong were his poetical instincts that a year later he abandoned the post to devote himself entirely to literary work.

His literary career began in 1849, his first poem being printed in 1852, in a journal called "Srbski Letopis" ("Servian Annual Review"); to this and to other journals, notably "Neven" and "Sedmica," he contributed his early productions. From that period until 1870, besides his original poems, he made many beautiful translations from Petefy and Arany, the two greatest of the Hungarian poets, and from the Russian of Lermontof, as well as from German and other poets. In 1861 he edited the comic journal, "Komarac" ("The Mosquito"), and in the same year he started the literary

journal, "Javor," and to these papers he contributed many beautiful poems. In 1861 he married, and during the few happy years that followed he produced his admirable series of lyrical poems called "Giulich," which probably remain his masterpiece. In 1862, greatly to his regret, he discontinued his beloved journal, "Javor"—a sacrifice which was asked of him by the great Servian patriot, Miletich, who was then active on a political journal, in order to insure the success of the latter.

In 1863 he was elected director of an educational institution, called the Tekelianum, at Budapest. He now ardently renewed the study of medicine at the university, and took the degree of doctor of medicine. Meanwhile he did not relax his literary labors. Yet, for his countrymen, more valuable even than his splendid productions were his noble and unselfish efforts to nourish the enthusiasm of Servian youth. During his stay in Budapest he founded the literary society Preodnica, of which he was president, and to which he devoted a large portion of his energies.

In 1864 he started his famous satirical journal, "Zmai" ("The Dragon"), which was so popular that the name became a part of his own. In 1866 his comic play "Sharan" was given with great success. In 1872 he had the great pain of losing his wife, and, shortly after, his only child. How much these misfortunes affected him is plainly perceptible from the deeply sad tone of the poems which immediately followed. In 1873 he started another comic journal, the "Ziza." During the year 1877 he began an illustrated chronicle of the Russo-Turkish war, and in 1878 appeared his popular comic

journal, "Starmali." During all this period he wrote not only poems, but much prose, including short novels, often under an assumed name. The best of these is probably "Vidosava Brankovicheva." In recent years he has published a great many charming little poems for children.

Since 1870 Zmai has pursued his profession as a physician. He is an earnest advocate of cremation, and has devoted much time to the furtherance of that cause. Until recently he was a resident of Vienna, but now he is domiciled in Belgrade. There he lives the life of a true poet, loving all and beloved by everybody. In recognition of his merit, the nation has voted him a subvention.

The poems of Zmai are so essentially Servian that to translate them into another tongue appears next to impossible. In keen satire free from Voltairian venom, in good-hearted and spontaneous humor, in delicacy and depth of expression, they are remarkable. Mr. Johnson has undertaken the task of versifying a few of the shorter ones after my literal and inadequate readings. Close translation being often out of the question, he has had to paraphrase, following as nearly as possible the original motives and ideas. In some instances he has expanded in order to complete a picture or to add a touch of his own. The poems which follow will give some idea of the versatility of the Servian poet, but come far short of indicating his range.

Nikola Tesla.

NEW YORK CITY.



THE THREE GIAOURS

IN the midst of the dark and stormy night
Feruz Pacha awakes in fright,
And springs from out his curtained bed.
The candle trembles as though it read
Upon his pallid face the theme
And terror of his nightly dream.

He calls to his startled favorite :
“ The keys ! the keys of the dungeon-pit !
Cannot those cursèd Giaours stay
There in their own dark, rotting away,
Where I gave them leave three years ago ?
Had I but buried their bones ! —but, no !
They come at midnight to clatter and creep,
And haunt and threaten me in my sleep.”

“ Pacha, wait till the morning light !
Do not go down that fearful flight

Where every step is a dead man's moan !
Mujo to-morrow will gather each bone
And bury it deep. Let the Giaours freeze
If thy bed be warm."

"Nay, give me the keys.

Girl, you talk like a wrinkled dame
That shudders at whisper of a name.
When they were living, their curses made
A thousand cowards : was I afraid ?
Now they are dead, shall my fear begin
With the Giaour's curse, or the skeleton's grin ?
No, I must see them face to face
In the very midst of their dwelling-place,
And find what need they have of me
That they call my name eternally."

As groping along to the stair he goes,
The light of the shaking candle shows
A face like a white and faded rose ;
But if this be fear, it is fear to stay,
For something urges him on his way—
Though the steps are cold and the echoes mock—
Till the right key screams in the rusted lock.

Ugh ! what a blast from the dungeon dank ! —
From the place where Hunger and Death were wed ;
Whence even the snakes by instinct fled,

While the very lizards crouched and shrank
In a chill of terror. 'T is inky black
And icy cold, but he cannot go back,
For there, as though the darkness flowers—
There sit the skeletons of three Giaours
Ghost-white in the flickering candle-gleam ! —
(Or is it the remnant of his dream ?)
About a stone that is green with mold
They sit in a group, and their fingers hold
Full glasses, and as the glasses clink
The first Giaour beckons him to drink.

“ Pacha, here is a glass for thee !

When last on me the sunlight shone
I had a wife who was dear to me.

She was alone—no, not alone ;
The blade in her hand was her comrade true,
As she came to your castle, seeking you.

“ And when she came to your castle gate
She dared you forth, but you would not go.
Fiend and coward, you could not wait

For a woman's wrath, but shot her, so.
Her heart fell down in a piteous flood.
This glass is filled with her precious blood.

“ See how fine as I hold it up !
Drink, Feruz Pacha, the brimming cup ! ”

Spellbound the Pacha now draws nigh ;
He empties the glass with a sudden cry :
The skeletons drink with a laugh and toss,
And they make the sign of the holy cross.

Then speaks the second of the dead :

“ When to this darkness I was led,
My mother asked, ‘ What sum will give
Your prisoner back to the sun ? ’ You said,
‘ Three measures of gold, and the dog shall
live.’

Through pinching toil by noon and night
She saved and saved till her hope grew bright.

“ But when she brought you the yellow hoard,
You mocked at the drops on her tired brow,
And said, ‘ Toward the pay for his wholesome
board

Of good round stones I will this allow.’
She died while her face with toil was wet.
This glass is filled with her faithful sweat.

“ See how fine as I hold it up !
Drink, Feruz Pacha, the brimming cup ! ”

Haggard the Pacha now stands by ;
He drains the glass with a stifled cry :

Again they drink with a laugh and toss,
And the third one says, as his comrades cross :

“ When this black shadow on me fell,
There sang within my mountain home
My one pale lad. Bethought him well
That he would to my rescue come ;
But when he tried to lift the gun
He tottered till the tears would run.

“ Though vengeance sped his weary feet,
Too late he came. Then back he crept,—
Forgot to drink, forgot to eat,—
And no slow moment went unwept.
He died of grief at his meager years.
This glass is laden with his tears.

“ See how fine as I hold it up !
Drink, Feruz Pacha, the brimming cup ! ”

The Pacha staggers ; he holds it high ;
He drinks ; he falls with a moan and cry :
They laugh, they cross, but they drink no more—
For the dead in the dungeon-cave are four.

LUKA FILIPOV

(AN INCIDENT OF THE MONTENEGRIN WAR OF 1876-78)

ONE more hero to be part
Of the Servians' glory !
Lute to lute and heart to heart
Tell the homely story ;
Let the Moslem hide for shame,
Trembling like the falcon's game,
Thinking on the falcon's name—
Luka Filipov.

When he fought with sword and gun
Doughty was he reckoned ;
When *he* was the foremost, none
Blushed to be the second.
But he tired of the taint
Of the Turk's blood, learned restraint
From his sated sword—the quaint
Luka Filipov.

Thus he reasoned: Though they fall
 Like the grass in mowing,
 Yet the dead Turks, after all,
 Make a sorry showing.
 Foes that die remember not
 How our Montenegrins bought
 Our unbroken freedom—thought
 Luka Filipov.

So, in last year's battle-storm
 Swooped our Servian falcon,
 Chose the sleekest of the swarm
 From beyond the Balkan:
 Plucked a pacha from his horse,
 Carried him away by force,
 While we cheered along his course:
 "Luka!" "Filipov!"

To the Prince his prize he bore
 Just as he had won him—
 Laid him at the Prince's door,
 Not a scratch upon him.
 "Prince, a present! And for fear
 He should find it lonely here,
 I will fetch his mate," said queer
 Luka Filipov.

Back into the fight he rushed
Where the Turks were flying,
Past his kinsmen boldly brushed,
Leaping dead and dying:
Seized a stalwart infidel,
Wrenched his gun and, like a spell,
Marched him back—him heeding well
Luka Filipov.

But the Moslems, catching breath
Mid their helter-skelter,
Poured upon him hail of death
From a rocky shelter,
Till a devil-guided ball
Striking one yet wounded all:
For there staggered, nigh to fall,
Luka Filipov !

Paused the conflict—all intent
On the two before us;
And the Turkish regiment
Cheered in hideous chorus
As the prisoner, half afraid,
Turned and started up the glade,
Thinking—dullard !—to evade
Luka Filipov.

We 'd have fired—but Luka's hand
 Rose in protestation,
 While his pistol's mute command
 Needed no translation ;
 For the Turk retraced his track,
 Knelt and took upon his back
 (As a peddler shifts his pack)
 Luka Filipov !

How we cheered him as he passed
 Through the line, a-swinging
 Gun and pistol—bleeding fast—
 Grim—but loudly singing :
 “ Lucky me to find a steed
 Fit to give the Prince for speed !
 Rein or saddle ne'er shall need
 Luka Filipov ! ”

So he urged him to the tent
 Where the Prince was resting—
 Brought his captive, shamed and spent,
 To make true his jesting.
 And as couriers came to say
 That our friends had won the day,
 Who should up and faint away ?
 Luka Filipov.

A MOTHER OF BOSNIA

I

THREE sons she has of Servian mold
As balsam for her widow's grief,
While in her Danka all behold
A treasure precious past belief.

Oh, lovely Danka ! happy she,
More fortunate than all beside,
To be the pride of brothers three,
Themselves of Bosnia the pride !

In her they glory ; she inspires
To freedom's never-ending fight,
And in their hearts burn patriot fires,
As stars upon the Turkish night.

And often at the mother's door
Tears mingle with the words that bless :

“O gods of battle ! guard my four—
My falcons and my falconess.”

II

HER radiant beauty nothing hides—
What wonder that the Turk has seen,
And as before her door he rides
The Raven-Aga calls her queen !

For three nights has he lain awake—
To call on Allah ? Nay, till dawn
Calling on Danka, for whose sake
His heart is sore, his brow is wan.

He gathers warriors ere the sun ;
They gallop quickly through the murk ;
And Danka, at the signal-gun,
Cries, “ Save me, brothers ! —’tis the Turk ! ”

Now flash the rifles, speeds the fight,
Till, shamed, the Raven-Aga flies.
Alas for Danka ! in her sight
One lion-hearted brother dies.

.

Again the infidel appears,
And at his heels ride forty guns;
But at the voice of Danka's fears
Red many a Turkish stirrup runs.

But, oh, at vespers, when once more
The baffled Raven back has fled,
Across the sill of Danka's door
There lies another brother, dead.

.

The Turkish devil once again
Summons each savage wedding-guest,
And half a hundred to be slain
Go forth at midnight toward the west.

Once more the stealthy Moslems ride,
Once more the Servians gather fast,
As Danka summons to her side
Her brother—and her last.

The fight grows fiercer, till the dead
Fill the dim street from wall to wall.
Call on thy mother, Battle-wed—
Thou hast no brother left to call!

The Raven seizes her and croaks:
"At last thou art my bride, proud maid!"

“Not thine—my yataghan’s!” Two strokes—
Her warm heart weds the loyal blade.

III

DARK is the night as on the slopes
Of that deserted battle-ground
The mother, crazed with sorrow, gropes
Until her sons’ three swords are found.

And as she roams through Servian lands
(Her mirth more piteous than tears)
She bears a blade in her thin hands
To right the wrongs of many years.

And offering Danka’s plighted knife
Or one of those three patriot swords,
She calls the coldest rock to strife,—
“Take, and repel the Turkish hordes!”

And as the rock no word replies,
She asks, “Are you not Servian too?
Why are you silent then?” she cries;
“Is there no living heart in you?”

She treads the dreary night alone;
There is no echo to her moan. . . .
Is every heart a heart of stone?

THE MONSTER

“ IN place of the heart, a serpent ;
Rage—for the mind’s command ;
An eye aflame with wildness ;
A weapon in the hand ;

“ A brow with midnight clouded ;
On the lips a cynic smile
That tells of a curse unmatched—
Born of a sin most vile.

“ Of longing, or hope, or virtue,
No vestige may there be ;
You, even in vice inhuman—
What can you want of me ?

“ You in its maddest moment
The Deepest Pit designed,—
Let loose to sow confusion
In the order of mankind ;

" Here Hatred found you crawling
Like vermin, groveling, prone,
Filled you with blood of others
And poisoned all your own.

" Your very thoughts are fiendish—
Smoke of the fires of Hell.
Weird as you are, how is it
I seem to know you well ?

" Why with your wild delirium
Do you infect my sleep ?
Why with my daily footstep
An equal measure keep ? "

.

The monster mutely beckons me
Back with his ghostly hand,
And dreading his fearful answer
I heed the grim command.

" Nay, softly," he says ; " I pray thee,
Silence thy frightened moan,
And wipe the sweat from thy forehead ;
My kinsman thou, my own !

“Look at me well, good cousin;
Such wert thou fashioned of!
Thou, too, wouldst me resemble
Without that magic—Love!”

TWO DREAMS

DEEP on the bosom of Jeel-Begzad

(Darling daughter of stern Bidar)

Sleeps the rose of her lover lad.

It brings this word: When the zenith-star

Melts in the full moon's rising light,

Then shall her Giaour come—to-night.

What is the odor that fills her room ?

Ah ! 't is the dream of the sleeping rose :

To feel his lips near its velvet bloom

In the secret shadow no moonbeam knows,

Till the maiden passion within her breast

Kindles to flame where the kisses rest.

By the stealthy fingers of old Bidar

(Savage father of Jeel-Begzad)

Never bloodless in peace or war

Was a handjar sheathed ; and each one had

Graved on its handle a Koran prayer—

He can feel it now, in his ambush there !

The moon rides pale in the quiet night ;
It puts out the stars, but never the gleam
Of the waiting blade's foreboding light,
Astir in its sheath in a horrid dream
Of pain, of blood, and of gasping breath,
Of the thirst of vengeance drenched in death.

.

The dawn did the dream of the rose undo,
But the dream of the sleeping blade came true.

MYSTERIOUS LOVE

INTO the air I breathed a sigh ;
 She, afar, another breathed—
Sighs that, like a butterfly,
Each went wandering low and high,
 Till the air with sighs was wreathed.

When each other long they sought,
 On a star-o'er-twinkled hill
Jasmine, trembling with the thought,
Both within her chalice caught,
 A lover's potion to distil.

Drank of this a nightingale,
 Guided by the starlight wan—
Drank and sang from dale to dale,
Till every streamlet did exhale
 Incense to the waking dawn.

Like the dawn, the maiden heard ;
 While, afar, I felt the fire

In the bosom of the bird ;
Forth our sighs again were stirred
With a sevenfold desire.

These we followed till we learned
Where they trysted ; there erelong
Their fond nightingale returned.
Deeper then our longings burned,
Deeper the delights of song.

Now, when at the wakening hour,
Sigh to sigh, we greet his lay,
Well we know its mystic power—
Feeling dawn and bird and flower
Pouring meaning into May.

Jasmine, perfume every grove !
Nightingale, forever sing
To the brightening dawn above
Of the mystery of love
In the mystery of spring !

THE COMING OF SONG

WHEN the sky darkened on the first great sin,
And gates that shut man out shut Hope within,
Like to the falcon when his wing is broke,
The bitter cry of mortals then awoke :
“Too heavy is our burden,” groaned the two.
“Shall woes forever on our track pursue,
And nest within these empty hearts ? Or, worse,
Shall we be withered by the cruel curse ?
Already less than human, shall we fall
By slow succession to some animal ? ”

Then, filled with pity at the desperate cry,
Came from His throne of thunder the Most High :
“That you should suffer ” (spake the Voice) “is just :
'T is you have chosen for a feast a crust.
But not so unrelenting I—the least
Of all your kind shall be above the beast.
That erring mortals be not lost in fear,
Come from My shining courts, O daughter dear !

Thou dost to heaven, shalt to earth belong."
She came; she stayed: it was the Muse of Song.

Again the day was radiant with light,
And something more than stars illumed the night.
Hope, beckoning, to the desert took its flight.

Where is Pain and dire Distress,
Song shall soothe like soft caress;
Though the stoutest courage fails,
Song 's an anchor in all gales;
When all others fail to reach,
Song shall be the thrilling speech;
Love and friends and comfort fled,
Song shall linger by your bed;
And when Doubt shall question, Why?
Song shall lift you to the sky.

CURSES

FAIN would I curse thee, sweet unkind!
That thou art fair;
Fain curse my mother, that not blind
She did me bear;
But, no ! —each curse would break, not bind,
The heart ye share.

A FAIRY FROM THE SUN-SHOWER

[When the Servians see the sun-rays of a summer shower they say it is the fairies combing their hair.]

OVER the meadow a shower is roaming ;
Just beyond is the summer sun ;
Fair is the hair that the fays are combing—
Myth come true ! here 's my dainty one
Tripping the path in the wind's soft blowing ;
Her slender form through her gown is showing,
Her foot scarce whispers the way she 's going.
"Come, my bright one, come, my soul,
Let my kisses be your goal."

But the path has heard my sighing,
Turns aside, and leads my fay
Into the forest, love defying.
Path, accursèd be ! — but stay !
Lost to love each moment gliding,
What if in the woodland hiding
Still for me my fay be biding ! . . .
"Wait, my bright one, wait, my soul,
Your sweet kisses are my goal."

"WHY," YOU ASK, "HAS NOT THE
SERVIAN PERISHED?"

FRAGMENT FROM THE "GIULICHE" ("JEWELS")

"WHY," you ask, "has not the Servian perished,
Such calamities about him throng?"
With the sword alike the lyre he cherished:
He is saved by Song!

"I BEGGED A KISS OF A LITTLE MAID"

I BEGGED a kiss of a little maid ;
Shyly, sweetly, she consented ;
Then of a sudden, all afraid,
After she gave it, she repented ;
And now as penance for that one kiss
She asks a poem—I 'll give her this.

But how can my song be my very best
When she, with a voice as soft as Circe's,
Has charmed the heart from my lonely breast—
The heart, the fountain of all true verses ?
Why, oh, why should a maid do this ?
No—I must give her back her kiss.

WHY THE ARMY BECAME QUIET

SOME said they did but play at war,—

How that may be, ah ! who can tell ?

I know the gallant army corps

Upon their fleeing foemen fell,

And sacked their camp, and took their town,

And won both victory and renown.

Now home returning, wild with song,

They come, the colors flying free.

But as within the door they throng,

Why does the army suddenly

Hush the fierce din, and silence keep ?—

Why, little brother is asleep.

THE GIPSY PRAISES HIS HORSE

You 're admiring my horse, sir, I see.

He 's so light that you 'd think it 's a bird—
Say a swallow. Ah me !

He 's a prize !

It 's absurd

To suppose you can take him all in as he passes

With the best pair of eyes,

Or the powerful aid

Of your best pair of glasses :

Take 'em off, and let 's trade.

What ! “ Is Selim as good as he seems ? ”

Never fear,

Uncle dear,

He 's as good as the best of your dreams,

And as sound as your sleep.

It 's only that kind that a gipsy would keep.

The emperor's stables can't furnish his mate.

But his grit and his gait,

And his wind and his ways,
A gipsy like me does n't know how to praise.
But (if truth must be told)
Although you should cover him over with gold
He 'd be worth one more sovereign still.

“Is he old?”

Oh, don't look at his teeth, my dear sir!
I never have seen 'em myself.
Age has nothing to do with an elf;
So it 's fair to infer
My fairy can never grow old.
Oh, don't look—(Here, my friend,
Will you do me the kindness to hold
For a moment these reins while I 'tend
To that fly on his shanks?) . . .
As I said—(Ah—now—thanks!)
The longer you drive
The better he 'll thrive.
He 'll never be laid on the shelf!
The older that colt is, the younger he 'll grow.
I 've tried him for years, and I know.

“Eat? Eat?” do you say?

Oh, that nag is n't nice
About eating! Whatever you have will suffice.

He takes everything raw—
Some oats or some hay,
Or a small wisp of straw,
If you have it. If not, never mind—
Selim won't even neigh.
What kind of a feeder is he ? That 's the kind !

“ Is he clever at jumping a fence ? ”
What a question to ask ! He 's immense
At a leap !
How absurd !

Why, the trouble 's to keep
Such a Pegasus down to the ground.
He takes every fence at a bound
With the grace of a bird ;
And so great is his strength,
And so keen is his sense,
He goes over a fence
Not across, but the way of its length !

“ Under saddle ? ” No saddle for Selim !
Why, you 've only to mount him, and feel him
Fly level and steady, to see
What disgrace that would be.
No, you could n't more deeply insult him, unless
You attempted to guess
And pry into his pedigree.

Now why should you speak of his eyes ?

Does he seem like a horse that would need
An eye-glass to add to his speed

Or, perchance, to look wise ?

No indeed.

Why, not only 's the night to that steed

Just the same as the day,

But he knows all that passes—

Both before and behind, either way.

Oh, he does n't need glasses !

“ Has he any defect ? ” What a question, my friend !

That is why, my dear sir, I am willing to sell.

You know very well

It is only the horse that you give or you lend

That has glanders, or springhalt, or something to mend :

'T is because not a breath

Of defect or of death

Can be found on my Selim that he 's at your pleasure.

Alas ! not for gipsies the care of such treasure.

And now about speed. “ Is he fast ? ” I should say !

Just listen—I 'll tell you.

One equinox day,

Coming home from Erdout in the usual way,

A terrible storm overtook us. 'T was plain

There was nothing to do but to run for it. Rain,

Like the blackness of night, gave us chase. But that nag,
Though he 'd had a hard day, did n't tremble or sag.

Then the lightning would flash,
And the thunder would crash
With a terrible din.

They were eager to catch him ; but he would just neigh,
Squint back to make sure, and then gallop away.
Well, this made the storm the more furious yet,
And we raced and we raced, but he was n't upset,
And he would n't give in !

At last when we got to the foot of the hill

At the end of the trail,

By the stream where our white gipsy castle was set,
And the boys from the camp came a-waving their caps,
At a word he stood still,

To be hugged by the girls and be praised by the chaps.
We had beaten the gale,

And Selim was dry as a bone—well, perhaps,
Just a little bit damp on the tip of his tail.*

* Readers will be reminded by this conclusion of Mark Twain's story of the fast horse as told to him by Oudinot, of the Sandwich Islands, and recorded in "The Galaxy" for April, 1871. In that veracious narrative it is related that not a single drop fell on the driver, but the dog was swimming behind the wagon all the way.



THE VOICE OF WEBSTER

THE VOICE OF WEBSTER

SILENCE was envious of the only voice
That mightier seemed than she. So, cloaked as Death,
With potion borrowed from Oblivion,
Yet with slow step and tear-averted look,
She sealed his lips, closed his extinguished eyes,
And veiling him with darkness, deemed him dead.
But no! — There 's something vital in the great
That blunts the edge of Death, and sages say
You should stab deep if you would kill a king.
In vain! The conqueror's conqueror he remains,
Surviving his survivors. And as when,
The prophet gone, his least disciple stands
Newly invested with a twilight awe,
So linger men beside his listeners
While they recount that miracle of speech
And the hushed wonder over which it fell.

What do they tell us of that fabled voice?
Breathing an upper air, wherein he dwelt
'Mid shifting clouds a mountain of resolve,
And falling like Sierra's April flood

That pours in ponderous cadence from the cliff,
Waking Yosemite from her sleep of snow,
And less by warmth than by its massive power
Thawing a thousand torrents into one.
Such was his speech, and were his fame to die
Such for its requiem alone were fit :
Some kindred voice of Nature, as the Sea
When autumn tides redouble their lament
On Marshfield shore ; some elemental force
Kindred to Nature in the mind of man—
A far-felt, rhythmic, and resounding wave
Of Homer, or a freedom-breathing wind
Sweeping the height of Milton's loftiest mood.
Most fit of all, could his own words pronounce
His eulogy, eclipsing old with new,
As though a dying star should burst in light.

And yet he spoke not only with his voice.
His full brow, buttressing a dome of thought,
Moved the imagination like the rise
Of some vast temple covering nothing mean.
His eyes were sibyls' caves, wherein the wise
Read sibyls' secrets ; and the iron clasp
Of those broad lips, serene or saturnine,
Made proclamation of majestic will.
His glance could silence like a frowning Fate.

His mighty frame was refuge, while his mien
Did make dispute of stature with the gods.

See, in the Senate, how his presence towers
Above the tallest, who but seem as marks
To guide the unwonted gaze to where he stands,
First of his peers—a lordly company.
Each State still gave the others of its best—
Our second race of giants, now, alas!
Buried beneath the lava-beds of war.
Not yet had weaklings trod the purchased path
To a feigned honor in the curule chair,
Holding a world's contempt of them for fame—
As one should take the leaves stripped from his scourge
To wreath himself a counterfeit of bay.
An age is merely Man, and, thus compact,
Must grimly expiate paternal sins;
That age's shame stands naked to the world,
And no man dares to hide it; yet one boast
Palsies the pointing finger of to-day:
'Twas slave, not master, that we bought and sold.

Oh for fit word of scorn to execrate
Our brood new-born of Greed and Liberty!
Not the blind mass of stumbling ignorance
(For the dread portent of a blackening cloud

May by bold shafts of sunlight be dispersed),
But those who lead them to the nation's hurt—
These our kind neighbors, semblances of men,
The Church's bulwark, the beloved of homes,
Locked fast in friendship's ever-loyal pledge,
Yet to whom treason is their daily breath.
Not Lucifer, on each conspiring wind
Rallying his abject crew to new assaults ;
Not all the recreant names that spawning War
Has cursed with immortality, can match
The craft of their betrayals. All is sold :
Law, justice, mercy, and the future's hope—
This land that buoys the fainting fears of Man.
Yet to praise Webster one of these has dared! —
Webster, undaunted by the hour's reproof,
Webster, untempted by the hour's applause,
Who scorned to win by any art but truth!
Who, had he heard the impious flattery,
Across the Senate would have launched his wrath,
Like Cicero on cowering Catiline,
In one white passion that forevermore
Had saved to Infamy an empty name
That now he spurns in silence from his grave.

Yet had he frailties, which let those recount
Who have not seen the nigh-o'erwhelmèd state

Rescued from peril by some roisterer's skill
While all the petted virtues of the home
Stood pale and helpless. Time 's a mountain-wall
That gives a fainter echo to one's best,
But unto weak or wanting, mere disdain.
He had his passions—all but one are dead :
That was his country. Never lover loved,
Soldier defended, poet praised, as he,
Who marveled all should worship not his queen,
And unto whoso loved her much forgave.
And when, one desperate day, the threatening hand
His hand so long arrested, he being gone,
Felt 'neath its pillow for the unsheath'd sword,
Who spoke for Union but with Webster's voice?
Who struck for Union but with Webster's arm?
Forgetful of the father in the son,
Men praised in Lincoln what they blamed in him.
And though, his natural tenderness grown grave,
He lives not in Love's immortality
Like Lincoln, shrined within his foeman's heart ;
Though he trod not the path of him whose soul
Triumphed in song that beckoned armies on
More than persuading drum, dare-devil fife,
Or clarion bugle ; though no battle-flame
Rose to a peak in him : yet was his blood
In heroes and his wrath in righteous war.

Then did the vision of his patriot hope,
Pictured in pleading but in warning words,
Inspire the inspirers, nerve the halting brave,
Make triflers solemn with the choice of death.
And when at last came Peace, the friend of all,
Grateful and wondrous as first drops of rain
After the long starvation of the drought,
Men harkened back to that prophetic hour
When two protagonists, like chosen knights,
Made long and suave epitome of war:
When Hayne arose 't was Sumter's gun was heard,
When Webster closed 't was Appomattox field.

But oh, his larger triumph was to come!
His voice, in victory potent, was in peace
Predominant. His all-benignant thought
That, never wavering through the strife of words,
No Alleghanies, no Potomac knew,
Searching the future to bring olive back,
Lived like a fragrance in the heart of Grant,
And at the perilous moment of success
Pointed the path to concord from the grave.
And what famed concord! —not a grudging truce,
Nor interlude of hate, but peace divine:
When hands with blood still wet again were clasped,
Each foe forgiving what is ne'er forgot;

The hacked sword eager for the scabbard's rest,
Not from the fear, but for the love of man.
O loftier conquest of the Blue that warred
For freedom, not for conquest! Victory,
Unsought, of all the hardly vanquished Gray!
Marvel of Europe staggering in arms;
Message of Hope unto the souls that herd
Dumb at the slaughter for the whim of kings;
Lusus of History until wars shall cease.
My country! since nor memory of strife,
Nor natural vengeance, nor the orphan's tears
Can from Love's nobler triumph hale thee back:
Who worthier than thou to lead the way
Unto the everlasting Truce of God,
When brothers shall toward brothers over sea
Stretch not the sword-blade, but the open palm,
Till on Time's long but ever-upward slope
They mount together to unreckoned heights,
And grateful nations gladly follow them!

.
So sang I, proud to be but one of all
The sands upon a shore whereon there breaks,
Freighted with purpose vast, the will of Heaven—
When a rude clash I heard, that yet I hear,
As Discord grasped again her rusted harp
And struck new terror from the raveled strings,

Calling Ambition blindfold to the lead
Of Want, Dishonor, Perfidy, and Crime,
Who in their turn misguide the innocent,
Groping their way by the last firebrands
Plucked from their holocaust of hoarded truth.
The air we fancied peaceful as the noon
Was dark with sudden hatred, as with cloud
Blown, in long-gathered tempest, from the West,
Like a wild storm of summer heat and wind
Circling in passion, bruited by dismay,
And dragging death and chaos in its train,
As some old myth of savagery come true,
And Nature had turned demon, rending Man.

This madness Webster still can medicine,
Who was physician to its earlier taint.
He did not fury then with fury meet,
But to the sanity of eternal law
Wooed back the wandering mind. Who could forget
His calming presence when, ere he began,
Confusion fled before his morning look
Of power miraculously new and mild ;
The speech as temperate as a wind of May ;
The mind as candid as the noonday light ;
The tones deliberate, confident, sedate,
Waking no passion, and yet moving all

With such a high compulsion that at length
Reason, the king that well-nigh had been lost
Upon the confines of his sovereign realm,
Remounted to the throne with steady step,
And men again were proud of his control.

So, in these days of hopeful hearts' despair,
When perils threat, ay, throng the ship of state,
And less from gale without than torch within,
Who—who but Webster with his faith serene
Shall rouse the sleeping to command their fate,
Shall bid them steer by the unswerving stars,
And in them troth with Liberty renew?
Imagination gave his spirit wings,
That, seeing past the tempest and the flame,
He might remind us of our destiny:
To save from faction what was meant for Man;
To cherish brotherhood, simplicity,
The chance for each that is the hope for all;
To guard the realm from Sloth, and Greed, and Waste—
The sateless Gorgons of democracy;
And above all, whatever storm may rage,
To cling to Law, the path of Liberty,
The prop of heaven, the very pulse of God.
Thus our new soil, the home of every seed,
Where first the whole world meets on equal terms,

Shall such new marvels show of man's estate
In knowledge, wisdom, beauty, virtue, power,
The Past shall fade in pity or in scorn,
While fresher joys shall thrill the pulse of earth.

No, Webster's fame not Webster's self can blot.
Fair is perfection's image in the soul,
And yearning for it holds the world to good.
Yet is it such a jewel as may not
Unto a single guardian be entrust,
But to the courage of a multitude
Who all together have what each may lack.
Though men may falter, it is Virtue's strength
To be indelible: our smallest good
By our worst evil cannot be undone.
The discords of that life—how short they fall,
Like ill-strung arrows! But its harmonies—
Harmonious speech large with harmonious thought—
Dwell in a nation's peace, a nation's hope,
Imperishable music; not the rhythm
Of some remembering moment, but the peal
And crash of conflict unforgettable
Piercing the mid and thick of night. No, no,
That voice of thunder died not with the storm,
But in the dull and coward times of peace
Long shall its echoes rouse the patriot's heart.

HANDS ACROSS SEA

The War of Independence was virtually a second English civil war. The ruin of the American cause would have been also the ruin of the constitutional cause in England; and a patriotic Englishman may revere the memory of Patrick Henry and George Washington not less justly than the patriotic American.

—JOHN MORLEY, on Burke.



HANDS ACROSS SEA

I

ENGLAND, thou breeder of heroes and of bards,
Had ever nation manlier shield or song!
For thee such rivalry have sword and pen,
Fame, from her heaped green, crowns with equal hand
The deathless deed and the immortal word.
For which dost thou thy Sidney hold more dear,
Defense of England or of Poesie?
Cromwell or Milton—if man's guiding stars
Could vanish as they came—which wouldst thou spare?
Lost Kempenfelt indeed, were Cowper mute!
To victory, not alone on shuddering seas
Rode Nelson, but on Campbell's tossing rhyme.
Hark to thy great Duke's greater dirge, and doubt
For which was Waterloo the worthier won,
To change the tyrant on a foreign throne,
Or add a faultless ode to English song.
Great deeds make poets: by whose nobler word,
In turn, the blood of heroes is transfused

Into the veins of sluggards, till they rise,
Surprised, exalted to the height of men.

Nor can Columbia choose between the two
Which give more glory to thy Minster gloom.
They are our brave, our deathless, our divine—
Our Saxon grasp on their embattled swords,
Our Saxon numbers in their lyric speech.
We grudge no storied wreath, nay, would withhold
Of bay or laurel not one envied leaf.
Then, on thy proud cliff fronting Europe-ward,
Strong in thyself, not by some weaker prop,
Give to the greeting of a kindred voice
A moment in the ebb of thy disdain.

II

Is it but chance that in thy treasured verse
There is no pæan, no exulting line,
No phrase of martial fervor, to record
The Briton's prowess on our Western shore?
There was no lapse of valiance in thy race—
Or else had Time forgot to mark the years.
Nor hast thou since had lack of many a voice
Whose words, like wings to seed, on every air
From land to hospitable land import

Thy progeny of courage, justice, truth.
Why, then, when all our songs were resonant,
Were all thy singers silent? Candor, speak!
There is a dæmon makes the Muses dumb
When they would praise the wrong: but Liberty
From Nature has inheritance of speech—
The forest harp, the flood's processional,
The glorious antiphone of every shore.
When these are dumb, then poets may be mute!

III

TAUGHT by thy heroes, summoned by thy bards,
Against the imperious folly of thy kings
Twice our reluctant banners were arrayed.
What matter if the victors were not thine,
If thine the victories? Thou art more secure
Saved from the canker of successful wrong.
Thou dost not blush for Naseby, where, of old,
England most conquered, conquering Englishmen.
So when thou hear'st the trumpets in our verse
In praise of our new land's deliverance,
Hard won from Winter, Hunger, and from thee,
And from those allies thou didst hire and scorn,
Deem it not hatred, nor the vulgar pride
Of the arena, nor the greed of fame.

('Twixt men or nations, there 's no victory
Save when an angel overcomes in both.)
Would all our strife were blameless! Some, alas!
Hath trophies hoarded only to be hid,
For courage cannot hallow wanton war.
Be proud our hand against thee ne'er was raised
But to wrench English justice from thy grasp.
And, as to landsmen, far from windy shores,
The breathing shell may bear the murmuring sea,
Still in our patriot song reverberates
The mighty voice that sang at Hampden's side.

IV

TRUE, there are those of our impassioned blood
Who can forget but slowly that thy great
Misread the omens of our later strife,
And knew not Freedom when she called to thee.
These think they hate thee! —these, who have embraced
Before the altar their fraternal foes!
Not white of York and red of Lancaster
More kindly mingle in thy rose of peace
Than blend in cloudless dawn our blue and gray.
Already Time and History contend
For sinking rampart and the grassy ridge
That with its challenge startles pilgrim feet

Along the fringes of the wounded wood.
The bedtime wonder of our children holds
Vicksburg coeval with the siege of Troy,
And the scorned slave so hastened to forgive
The scar has lost remembrance of the lash.
Since Love has drawn the sting of that distress,
For one with wrath to compass sea and years
Were but to make of injury a jest,
Holding the occasion guiltier than the cause.
But Hate 's a weed that withers in the sun;
A cell of which the prisoner holds the key,
His will his jailer; nay, a frowning tower
Invincible by legions, but with still
One secret weakness: *who can hate may love.*
Oh, pausing in thy cordon of the globe,
Let one full drop of English blood be spilled
For Liberty, not England: men would lose
Their fancied hatred in an ardor new,
As Minas Channel turns to Fundy's tide.
Hate thee? Hast thou forgot red Pei-ho's stream,
The triple horror of the ambushade,
The hell of battle, the foredoomed assault,
When thou didst stand the champion of the world,
Though the awed sea for once deserted thee?
Who then sprang to thee, breaking from the bonds
Of old observance, with a human cry,

Thirsting to share thy glorious defeat
As men are wont to covet victory?
Hate thee? Hast thou forgot Samoa's reef,
The day more dark than any starless night,
The black storm buffeting the hopeless ships,
The struggle of thy sons, and, as they won,
Gaining the refuge of the furious deep,
The immortal cheers that shook the *Trenton's* deck,
As Death might plead with Nature for the brave?
Stands there no monument upon that strand?
Then let remembrance build a beacon high,
That long its warning message may remind
How common danger stirs the brother heart.

v

WHY turn the leaf back to an earlier page?
To-day, not moved by memory or fear,
But by the vision of a nobler time,
Millions cry toward thee in a passion of peace.
We need thee, England, not in armed array
To stand beside us in the empty quarrels
That kings pursue, ere War itself expire
Like an o'er-armored knight in desperate lunge
Beneath the weight of helmet and of lance;
But now, in conflict with an inner foe
Who shall in conquering either conquer both.

For it is written in the book of fate :
By no sword save her own falls Liberty.
A wondrous century trembles at its dawn,
Conflicting currents telling its approach ;
And while men take new reckonings from the peaks,
Reweigh the jewel and retaste the wine,
Be ours to guard against the impious hands
That, like rash children, tamper with that blade.
Thou, too, hast seen the vision : shall it be
Only a dream, caught in the web of night,
Lost through the coarser meshes of the day?
Or like the beauty of the prismic bow,
Which the sun's ardor, that creates, consumes?
Oh, may it be the thing we image it! —
The beckoning spirit of our common race
Floating before us in a fringe of light
With Duty's brow, Love's eyes, the smile of Peace ;
Benignant figure of compelling mien,
Star-crowned, star-girdled, and o'erstrewn with stars,
As though a constellation should descend
To be fit courier to a glorious age.

VI

O THOU that keepest record of the brave,
Something of us to thee is lost, more worth
Than all the fabled wealth of sibyls' leaves.

Not with dull figures, but with heroes' deeds,
Fill up those empty annals. Teach thy youth
To know not North's but Byron's Washington ;
To follow Hale's proud step as tearfully
As we pale André's. And when next thy sons
Stand in Manhattan gazing at the swirl
Of eddying trade from Trinity's brown porch,
Astonished, with the praise that half defames,
At the material greatness of the scene,—
The roar, the fret, the Babel-towers of trade,—
Let one stretch forth a hand and touch the stone
That covers Lawrence, saying, "To this height
Our English blood has risen." And to know
The sea still speaks of courage, let them learn
What murmurs it of Craven in one bay,
And what of Cushing shouts another shore.
(Find but one star, how soon the sky is full!
One hero summons hundreds to the field :
So to the memory.) Let them muse on Shaw,
Whose bones the deep did so begrudge the land
It sent its boldest waves to bring them back
Unto the blue domed Pantheon where they lie,
The while his soul still leads in martial bronze ;
Tell them of sweet-dirged Winthrop, whom to name
Is to be braver, as one grows more pure
Breathing the thought of lover or of saint ;

Grim Jackson, Covenanter of the South,
And her well-christened Sidney, fallen soon ;
Kearny and Lyon. Of such hearts as these
Who would not boast were braggart of all else.
Each fought for Right—and conquered with the Best.
Such graves are all the ruins that we have—
Our broken arch and battlement—to tell
That ours, like thine, have come of Arthur's race.

O England, wakened from thy lull of song,
Thy scepter, sword, and spindle, fasces-like,
Bound with fresh laurel as thy sign of strength,
When shalt thou win us with a theme of ours,
Reclaiming thus thine own, till men shall say :
“That was the noblest conquest of her rule” ?

NEW YORK, 1897.



III

ITALIAN RHAPSODY

AND OTHER POEMS



TO WILLIAM FAYAL CLARKE

POEMS OF ITALY



ITALIAN RHAPSODY*

I

DEAR Italy! The sound of thy soft name
Soothes me with balm of Memory and Hope.
Mine, for the moment, height and sweep and slope
That once were mine. Supreme is still the aim
To flee the cold and gray
Of our December day,
And rest where thy clear spirit burns with unconsuming
flame.

II

There are who deem remembered beauty best,
And thine, imagined, fairer is than sight
Of all the charms of other realms confessed,
Thou miracle of sea and land and light.
Was it lest, envying thee,
The world unhappy be,
Benignant Heaven gave to all the all-consoling Night?

* Read before the Mother Chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Fraternity, William and Mary College, February 10, 1902.

III

Remembered beauty best? Who reason so?
Not lovers, yearning to the same dumb star
That doth disdain their passion—who, afar,
Seek touch and voice in velvet winds and low.
No, storied Italy,
Not thine that heresy,
Thou who thyself art fairer far than Fancy e'er can
show.

IV

To me thou art an ever-brooding spell;
An old enchantment, exorcised of wrong;
A beacon, whereagainst the wings of Song
Are bruised so, they cannot fly to tell;
A mistress, at whose feet
A myriad singers meet,
To find thy beauty the despair of measures full and
sweet.

V

Of old, ere caste or custom froze the heart,
What tales of thine did Chaucer re-indite,—
Of Constance, and Griselda, and the plight
Of pure Cecilia,—all with joyous art!

Oh, to havest journeyed down
To Canterbury town,
And known, from lips that touched thy robe, that triad
of renown!

VI

Fount of Romance whereat our Shakspere drank!
Through him the loves of all are linked to thee
By Romeo's ardor, Juliet's constancy.
He sets the peasant in the royal rank;
Shows under mask and paint
Kinship of knave and saint,
And plays on stolid man with Prospero's wand and
Ariel's prank.

VII

Another English foster-child hadst thou
When Milton from the breast of thy delight
Drew inspiration. With a vestal's vow
He fed the flame caught from thy sacred light.
And when upon him lay
The long eclipse of day,
Thou wert the memory-hoarded treasure of his doomed
sight.

VIII

Name me a poet who has trod thy soil;
 He is thy lover, ever hastening back,
With thee forgetting weariness and toil,
 The nightly sorrow for the daily lack.
 How oft our lyric race
 Looked last upon thy face!
Oh, would that I were worthy thus to die in thine
 embrace!

IX

Oh, to be kin to Keats as urn with urn
 Shares the same Roman earth! —to sleep, apart,
 Near to the bloom that once was Shelley's heart,
Where bees, like lingering lovers, re-return;
 Where the proud pyramid,
 To brighter glory bid,
Gives Cestius his longed-for fame, marking immortal
 Art.

X

Or, in loved Florence, to repose beside
 Our trinity of singers! Fame enough
 To neighbor lordly Landor, noble Clough,
And her, our later sibyl, sorrow-eyed.

Oh, tell me—not their arts,
But their Italian hearts
Won for their dust that narrow oval, than the world
more wide!

XI

So might I lie where Browning should have lain,
My "Italy" for all the world to read,
Like his on the palazzo. For thy pain
In losing from thy rosary that bead,
England accords thee room
Around his minster tomb—
A province conquered of thy soul, and not an Arab
slain!

XII

Then take these lines, and add to them the lay,
All inarticulate, I to thee indite:
The sudden longing on the sunniest day,
The happy sighing in the stormiest night,
The tears of love that creep
From eyes unwont to weep,
Full with remembrance, blind with joy, and with devotion
deep.

XIII

Absence from thee is such as men endure
 Between the glad betrothal and the bride ;
Or like the years that Youth, intense and sure,
 From his ambition to his goal must bide.
 And if no more I may
 Mount to Fiesole . . .
Oh, then were Memory meant for those to whom is Hope
 denied.

XIV

Show me a lover who hath drunk by night
 Thy beauty-potion, as the grape the dew :
 'T were little wonder he were poet too,
With wine of song in unexpected might,
 While moonlit cloister calls
 With plashy fountain-falls,
Or darkened Arno moves to music with its mirrored
 light.

XV

Who can withstand thee? What distress or care
 But yields to Naples, or that long day-dream
We know as Venice, where alone more fair
 Noon is than night ; where every lapping stream

Wooes with a soft caress
Our new-world weariness,
And every ripple smiles with joy at sight of scene so
rare.

XVI

The mystery of thy charm—ah, who hath guessed?
'T was ne'er divined by day or shown in sleep;
Yet sometimes Music, floating from her steep,
Holds to our lips a chalice brimmed and blest:
Then know we that thou art
Of the Ideal part—
Of Man's one thirst that is not quenched, drink he
howe'er so deep.

XVII

Thou human-hearted land, whose revels hold
Man in communion with the antique days,
And summon him from prosy greed to ways
Where Youth is beckoning to the Age of Gold;
How thou dost hold him near
And whisper in his ear
Of the lost Paradise that lies beyond the alluring haze!

XVIII

In tears I tossed my coin from Trevi's edge,—
A coin unsordid as a bond of love,—
And, with the instinct of the homing dove,
I gave to Rome my rendezvous and pledge.
And when imperious Death
Has quenched my flame of breath,
Oh, let me join the faithful shades that throng that
fount above.

THE HOUR OF AWE

Not in the five-domed wonder
Where the soul of Venice lies,
When the sun cleaves the gloom asunder
With pathways to Paradise,
And the organ's melodious thunder
Summons you to the skies ;

Not in that rarest hour,
When over the Arno's rush
The City of Flowers' flower
Looms in the sunset flush,
And the poignant stroke from the tower
Pierces the spirit's hush ;

Not Rome's high vault's devising
That builded the heavens in,
When you know not the anthem's rising
From the song of the cherubin,
Where, sight and soul surprising,
Dusk utters your dearest sin :

Not these—nor the star-sown splendor,
Nor the deep wood's mystery,
Nor the sullen storm's surrender
To the ranks of the leaping sea,
Nor the joy of the springtime tender
On Nature's breast to be ;

But to find in a woman's weeping
The look you have longed to find,
And know that in Time's safe-keeping,
Through all the ages blind,
Was Love, like a winged seed, sleeping
For you and the waiting wind.

TITIAN'S TWO LOVES, IN THE BORGHESE

ONE forgets not the first dead he sorrowed over;
One forgets not the first kiss of the first lover.
Not the dust of ages could remembrance cover
How in Titian's golden kingdom first I strayed.

Oh, that Roman morning's azure, softly sifting
Through the gray, the while the rapt eye caught the
 rifting
Of the sun's rich fire where molten mists were drifting,
As one looks upon an opal gently swayed.

Ah! but in the palace there was sun more golden!
Art for once to Nature was no more beholden.
Man to his belovèd had the passion olden
Sung in color, and his mighty Love grew Fame.

For I guessed, while hotly others were contending
Which was Love Divine, that each to each was lending
Supplemental graces for a perfect blending—
That to paint one twofold woman was his aim.

One without the other's beauty were but torso :
 Human needs divine, ah, yes, and—maybe more so—
 By divine is needed. (Singing down the Corso
 I, elate, enthralled, went, happy just to be!)

.

Yet till thee at last I knew—each blended feature
 Where the two Loves meet in rightly balanced nature—
 Never had I known a tithe of Titian's creature :
 God, the master limner, painted both in thee.

POEMS ON PUBLIC EVENTS

THE LISTENING SWORD

(WRITTEN ON THE EVE OF THE SPANISH WAR)

STILL on the hilt, O Patience, keep thy hand!
Though in the sheath the uneasy sword may leap
That waits, and, for its waiting, cannot sleep.
For it doth envy Arthur's knightly brand
And each fame-wreathèd weapon, hero-manned,
That the world's freemen in remembrance keep.
Oh, how can steel be deaf when nations weep
With the loud sobbing of the desolate strand!

Are there who think, "The hilt hears, not the blade,
Snug in its silence"? Ah, from storms upcaught
Fall not too soon the lightnings of the Lord.
Justice, thou God in Man, when thou hast weighed
All in thy balance, show us what we ought.
Then, Patience, not till then, loose the appointed
sword.

March 30, 1898.

DEWEY AT MANILA

I

'T WAS the very verge of May
When the bold *Olympia* led
Into Boca Grande gray
Dewey's squadron, dark and dread—
Creeping past Corregidor,
Guardian of Manila's shore.

Do they sleep who wait the fray?
Is the moon so dazzling bright
That our cruisers' battle-gray
Melts into the misty light? . . .
Ah! the rockets flash and soar!
Wakes at last Corregidor!

All too late their screaming shell
Tears the silence with its track.
This is but the *gate* of Hell;
We 've no leisure to turn back.
Answer, *Boston*—then once more
Slumber on, Corregidor!

And as, like a slowing tide,
Onward still the vessels creep,
Dewey, watching, falcon-eyed,
Orders: "Let the gunners sleep;
For we meet a foe at four
Fiercer than Corregidor."

Well they slept, for well they knew
What the morrow taught us all—
He was wise (as well as true)
Thus upon the foe to fall.
Long shall Spain the day deplore
Dewey ran Corregidor.

II

MAY is dancing into light
As the Spanish Admiral,
From a dream of phantom fight,
Wakens at his sentry's call.
Shall he leave Cavite's lee,
Hunt the Yankee fleet at sea?
O Montojo, to thy deck,
That to-day shall float its last!
Quick! To quarters! Yonder speck
Grows a hull of portent vast. .

Hither, toward Cavite's lee
Comes the Yankee hunting thee!

Not for fear of hidden mine
Halts our doughty Commodore.
He, of old heroic line,
Follows Farragut once more,
Hazards all on victory,
Here within Cavite's lee.

If he loses, all is gone;
He will win because he must.
And the shafts of yonder dawn
Are not quicker than his thrust.
Soon, Montojo, he shall be
With thee in Cavite's lee.

Now, Manila, to the fray!
Show the hated Yankee host
This is not a holiday—
Spanish blood is more than boast.
Fleet and mine and battery,
Crush him in Cavite's lee!

Lo, Hell's geysers at our fore
Pierce the plotted path—in vain,
Nerving every man the more
With the memory of the *Maine*!

Now at last our guns are free
Here within Cavite's lee.

"Gridley," says the Commodore,
"You may fire when ready." Then
Long and loud, like lions' roar
When a rival dares the den,
Breaks the awful cannonry
Full across Cavite's lee.

Who shall tell the thrilling tale
Of Our Thunderbolt's attack,
Finding, when the chart should fail,
By the lead his dubious track,
Five ships following faithfully
Five times o'er Cavite's lee;

Of our gunners' deadly aim;
Of the gallant foe and brave
Who, unconquered, faced with flame,
Seek the mercy of the wave—
Choosing honor in the sea
Underneath Cavite's lee!

Let the meed the victors gain
Be the measure of their task.
Less of flinching, stouter strain,
Fiercer combat—who could ask?

And "surrender"—'t was a word
That Cavite ne'er had heard.

Noon—the woeful work is done!

Not a Spanish ship remains;
But, of their eleven, none

Ever was so truly Spain's!
Which is prouder, they or we,
Thinking of Cavite's lee?

ENVOY

BUT remember, when we 've ceased
Giving praise and reckoning odds,
Man shares courage with the beast,
Wisdom cometh from the gods.
Who would win, on land or wave,
Must be wise as well as brave.

May 10, 1898.

THE WELCOME OF OUR TEARS

(ON THE RETURN OF A REGIMENT FROM THE SPANISH WAR)

Now is the time to be glad!

Now is the time to be gay!

With welcome the city is mad,

And the flags and the wind are at play.

There, down the street full of faces

(Like a furrow that Joy has plowed),

The heart and the eye run races

Which first shall greet the proud.

Nearer and nearer they come!

I can tell by the cheer and the shout

That keep just ahead of the drum

Where the little flags break out.

I can tell by the blood's quick leaping

My sluggish veins along,

I can tell by my footstep keeping

The rhythm of battle-song.

Against them the sword of the Cid

In the hand of a haughty foe ;

Against them the jungle that hid

Iron-fanged serpents a-row ;

Against them the storm and the baking
Of sun on the rain-drenched skin;
Against them the fever's aching,
Against them our civic sin.

Here they are! father and lad.
Now let us cheer them—but stay!
Too haggard that face to be glad,
Too weary those feet to be gay.
God! are these phantoms the handsome
Young knights that went, eager to save?
O Freedom, is this then the ransom
We give for the starved and the slave?

They whom we welcome to-day—
Why do the shout and the cheer
Lining each step of their way
Seem like a dirge and a tear?
Is it that some may be wearing
Laurels of others? Ay, see!
Count the thin ranks of the daring:
Each wears his laurels for three!

And we thought it a time to be glad!
And we thought it a time to be gay!

NEW YORK, September 22, 1898.

AN ENGLISH MOTHER

EVERY week of every season out of English ports go
forth,
White of sail or white of trail, East, or West, or South,
or North,
Scattering like a flight of pigeons, half a hundred home-
sick ships,
Bearing half a thousand striplings—each with kisses on
his lips
Of some silent mother, fearful lest she show herself too
fond,
Giving him to bush or desert as one pays a sacred bond.
—Tell us, you who hide your heartbreak, Which is
sadder, when all 's done,
To repine, an English mother, or to roam, an English
son?

You who shared your babe's first sorrow when his cheek
no longer pressed
On the perfect, snow-and-roseleaf beauty of your mother-
breast,

In the rigor of his nurture was your woman's mercy mute,
Knowing he was doomed to exile with the savage and
the brute?

Did you school yourself to absence, all his adolescent
years,

That, though you be torn with parting, he should never
see the tears?

Now his ship has left the offing for the many-mouthèd
sea,

This your guerdon, empty heart, by empty bed to bend
the knee!

And if he be but the latest thus to leave your dwindling
board,

Is a sorrow less for being added to a sorrow's hoard?

Is the mother-pain the duller that to-day his brothers
stand,

Facing ambuscades of Congo or alarms of Zululand?

Toil, where blizzards drift the snow like smoke across
the plains of death?

Faint, where tropic fens at morning steam with fever-
laden breath?

Die, that in some distant river's veins the English blood
may run—

Mississippi, Yangtze, Ganges, Nile, Mackenzie, Amazon?

Ah! you still must wait and suffer in a solitude untold
While your sisters of the nations call you passive, call
 you cold—
Still must scan the news of sailings, breathless search
 the slow gazette,
Find the dreaded name . . . and, later, get his blithe
 farewell! And yet—
Shall the lonely at the hearthstone shame the legions
 who have died
Grudging not the price their country pays for progress
 and for pride?
—Nay; but, England, do not ask us thus to emulate
 your scars
Until women's tears are reckoned in the budgets of your
 wars.

1899.

"THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN"

WHAT is the White Man's burden?
Does destiny demand
His back be laden higher
By every dusky hand?
Am I my brother's keeper—
Or keeper of his land?

What is the White Man's burden?
Is it the mounting flood
Of treasure, vain to vanquish
The tides of patriot blood,
While our supremest jewel
Is trampled in the mud?

What is the White Man's burden
That weighs upon his sleep?
To hear the hundreds dying?
To see the thousands weep?
Oh, wanton war that haunts him!
Oh, seed that he must reap!

What is the White Man's burden—
The burden of his song
That once was "Peace and Justice;
The Weak beside the Strong"?
He falters in the singing
At memory of the wrong.

What though our vaunt of Freedom
Must evermore be mute,
And the trading of men's vices
Drag both below the brute?
Go bribe new ships to bring it—
The White Man's burden—loot!

ON READING OF ATROCITIES IN WAR

MILD is the air of April,
Gentle the sky above,
And the budding and the mating
Call for a song of love ;
But the season on my singing
Has lost its olden spell
Because of a shame and sorrow
Men close their eyes to tell.

I see but the tears of women
In the rain of the springtime flood ;
I cannot brook the flowers—
They only smell of blood.
Sad is the playground frolic—
Its joy and laughter melt
In the moan of children sobbing
From jungle and from veldt.

O ye in the halls of council,
You may conquer the distant foe,
But still before a higher court
Your needless wars must go.

Too much you ask of silence ;
Too fierce the iron heel.
Because one statesman blundered
Must every heart be steel?

O Britain! O Columbia!
Too much of sodden strife.
Back to the banished gospel—
The sacredness of life!
Else shall our ties of language
And law and race and fame
Be naught to the bond that binds us
In one eternal shame.

April 8, 1902.

THE KEEPER OF THE SWORD*

(APROPOS OF THE DREYFUS TRIAL AT RENNES)

HAIL to that Breton law by which a lord,
Fate-hounded,—he whose sires had sought the Grail,—
Left with the State his sword, as Honor's bail,
While on a western isle he won reward
Of his brave patience, in a golden hoard;—
Speeding from exile (the wide sea a jail
If but the wrong wind filled his yearning sail!)
To claim once more his heritage and sword.

France, dost thou heed the omen? 'T was at Rennes! —
Where one who loved thee, cruel,—loved thee, blind,—
Now fronts thee proudly with the old demand.
Oh! . . . thou hast broke it! . . . Haste! the
fragments find,
And in the forge of Justice weld again
That undishonored blade for his forgiving hand.

August 7, 1899.

* Readers of the "Sentimental Journey" will recall Sterne's account of the custom here referred to, as narrated in the chapter entitled "The Sword: Rennes."

REMEMBER WARING!

(THE CITY AGAINST TAMMANY, 1901)

AGAIN the bugle-blow
To meet the common foe
Summons the daring.
Can ye not hear the call
Echo from every wall—
“Remember Waring”?

He stormed the fetid street
Where Death with rapid feet
Strode fierce and glaring.
Shall *we* forget, alone,
When every grateful stone
Remembers Waring?

He, to your service true;
He, in his love of you
Himself not sparing;
Whom gold could not allure;
Guardian of rich and poor—
Our soldier Waring!

He found a wretched throng—
Rescued from ancient wrong—
 New burdens bearing;
And babes that he did save
Cry from a later grave:
 “Remember Waring.”

He dared a tropic hell
Of fever—till he fell,
 And we, despairing,
Knew that for us he died,
And in our grieving cried:
 “Remember Waring!”

Shall we be less than they
Who make the poor their prey,
 No least one sparing?
They praise him, though they fill
Each tainted purse; *they* still
 Remember Waring.

How shall our deed atone
That nowhere bronze or stone
 His name is bearing?
His ashes in their urn
With his old ardor burn,
 And plead, for Waring:

“ Oh, if the work I wrought
Be to your memory aught,
Now Greed is tearing
The crown from Freedom's brow,
Strike harder that you now
Remember Waring.”

Then, ere the heart grow cold,
Let us on altars old
New vows be swearing:
“ Perish the people's foe!
Scorn for his tool!” and so
Remember Waring.

POEMS OF HEART AND SOUL

TO ONE BORN ON THE LAST DAY OF
NOVEMBER

UPON this day, divinely blest,
When thou wert born, as to their guest,
Three seasons gave thee of their best.

March brought the graceful stir of Spring;
April, a tender song to sing;
May, the most winsome blossoming;

June gave sweet breath, and that pale flush
July has deepened in thy blush.
Repose came with the August hush.

September blent thy glowing hair
With glowing temple, as the air
Of twilight blendeth dark and fair.

October's dower was so rife
With treasure, futile further strife,
And so November gave thee—life.

So keen and icy was the smart
Of Winter (since he had no part
In fashioning thy radiant heart),

He bade December so to plead
For thee, petitioning his need,
That the relenting Fates took heed;

And though November's thou must be,
Yet nearest Winter (they decree)
Is set thy gracious ministry.

MUSIC AND LOVE

Who longs for music merely longs for Love.
For Love is music, and no minstrel needs
Save his own sigh to breathe upon the reeds
From heart too full, and—like the adoring dove
That cooes all day the darling nest above,
Content if hour to happy hour succeeds—
Nor morning's song, nor noon's rich silence, heeds,
Nor the old mysteries evening whispers of.

But when the voice is echoless, the hand
Long empty, then, O wedded harp and flute,
Remind us Love 's eternal, not Time's toy.
O viol, at whose brink of pain we stand,
Love in thy muted anguish is not mute,
But thrills with memory's new-remembered joy.

AT A CONCERT

MUSIC inspires me but to think of thee,
For thou art of the music of the world—
A strain of that imperishable voice
That speaks in beauty, harmony, and love.
When Mozart wakes the gladness of my youth
I see perpetual childhood in thy face.
When Chopin, hand in hand with Love, leads on
Through meadowy pleasures to the brink of pain,
How near, how tender is thy beating heart!
And oh, when from the skies Beethoven sounds
His sure, triumphant song, how it vibrates
Deep memories of thy reposeful soul!

AFTER THE SONG

(TO E. J. W.)

IF to your wondrous voice and art
I give not plaudits with the throng,
'T is lest I spill my brimming heart
And in the singer lose the song.

Too soon the sweetest cadence dies ;
The vanished vision leaves but this :
The burden of the things we prize,
The pathos of the things we miss.

Oh, for a silence that should hold
These echoes of delicious sound
As depths of a still lake enfold
Brooks that fall fainter bound by bound.

Yours is the art of Orphic power
To charm the soul from out its hell—
Deserts of absence to reflower
With rose instead of asphodel.

Like dew on gossamer, a tear
Lies on the fabric of our dream :
Despairing hope ! that we who hear
Might be as noble as you seem.

SONG FOR YOUTH

O FLOWER-LIKE years of youth,
 Delay, delay!
Old Time shall soon, forsooth,
December make of May.
 Bid him away!

O flower-like years of youth,
 Oh, stay ; oh, stay!
Nor covet Age uncouth,
When all is warm and gay
 For you to-day.

O flower-like years of youth,
 Delay, delay!
Let others seek for Truth ;
Yours is the time for play
 And dance of fay.

O flower-like years of youth,
 Oh, stay ; oh, stay!
Time with remorseless tooth
Shall gnaw your bloom away ;
 Then say him nay.

O flower-like years of youth,
 Delay, delay!
Age knows for you no ruth;
Then, till your latest day,
 Hold him at bay.

SONG OF REMEMBRANCE

BIRD of the swaying bough
(*Like the voice of a lover's vow*),
You shall hold for me ever, as now,
The thrill of your morning song.

Bubble of April light
(*Like the glance of a lover's sight*),
You shall into my winter night
The soul of the noon prolong.

Cloud of the wind-swept land
(*Like the touch of a lover's hand*),
In the memory you shall stand
Though you flee from the flaming sky.

Rose of the scattered bower
(*Like Love's most fragrant hour*),
When shall you lose your power?
When I no more am I.

STAR-SONG

WHEN sunset flows into golden glows,
And the breath of the night is new,
Love, find afar yon yearning star—
That is my thought of you.

And when your eye doth scan the sky
Your lonely lattice through,
Choose any one, from sun to sun—
That is my thought of you.

And when you wake at the morning's break
To rival rose and dew,
The star that stays in the leaping rays—
That is my thought of you.

SONG FOR A WEDDING-DAY

POPLAR, straight and fair and tall :
Graceful though your sway,
Well for your soft rise and fall
That Helen is away.

Bud, about whose fragrant side
All the pleasures play :
Rose, remember in your pride
That Helen is away.

Heart, whose hope she never knew :
Though other hearts be gay,
None need ever tell to you
That Helen is away.

WITH A TOAST TO THE BRIDE

THEY met, they looked, they sighed, they loved ;
Straight each the other chose.

(Why wait till slow-paced years have proved
What each by instinct knows?)

Whate'er mistake we mortals make,
Sure, none is made above.

Give prudence to the prudes ; there is
No substitute for love.

Howe'er the worldly-wise may mate,
Apart from soul or sense,

And as undying passion rate
Their tepid preference,

Love is the wing that 's sure to bring
Back to the ark the dove.

What all their wisdom? Ah, it is
No substitute for love.

And those who by ambition blind
Would with a title wed,

That, when they are not sore maligned,
They may be envièd,

Heaven sends them pride wherewith to hide
The loss they know not of—
To find—too late, alas!—there is
No substitute for love.

Then here 's success to youth and maid
Who hold in hopeful hands
And weave together, unafraid,
Life's old mysterious strands.
“Love is enough”—that is the stuff
Fortune is fashioned of.
To face the fickle world, there 's naught
To substitute for love.

TO JUNE

MONTH of the perfect love,
Month of the perfect leaf,—
The mellow-mourning dove
Thine only note of grief,—
Oh, let me hide within thy shade a sorrow past relief!

Thou, unto whose employ
All Nature's arts belong—
Fragrance and warmth and joy :
Admit me to thy throng.
Thou canst not dull the pang, but oh! tune every chord
to song!

A LOVER'S ANSWER

THOU seekest, "Where is heaven?" Oh, Love, 't is
where

Thou shalt be, though thou be in hell.

"And what's hell?" Oh, darling, 't were to dwell
In highest heaven and thou not there.

THE GUEST

I HAVE a guest, but cannot tell
If he were bid or sent,
Yet welcome, as by desert well
The Arab to the tent.
How long will he consent to stay
To give a reason for the day?

And if he go, can I unlearn
His songs of joy and pain?
His torch, that was so quick to burn,
How can I quench again—
That torch that lights with fadeless flame
One face, one memory, one name!

TO ONE WHO COMPLAINED OF A
LOVER'S PERSISTENCE

You hear but the moans that break
On the rocks at your feet—but hark!
Perchance through the dreary dark
A cry from a drifting wreck!

INTERPRETERS

ONE conned my simple lines with cynic art,
Then smiled, as though he found a friend in me,
And read: "If Love alone possess your heart,
Then can you never more unhappy be."

Another, feeling still Love's bitter dart.
Smiled through her joyful tears triumphantly,
And read: "If Love alone possess your heart,
Then can you nevermore unhappy be."

THE TRYST

THE panting north wind staggers
A-clutch with the sullen tide,
And the blast with a hundred daggers
Is piercing the rower's side.
They say he was mad to venture,
They moan on the icy shore ;
But pleading, or fear, or censure
Shall carry him back no more.

For what is the cold wave's seething,
Or the rush of the white-speared storm,
To the thought of the sweet South, breathing
From lips that are pure and warm ;
Or the thrust of the angry billow
To the rise of her tranquil breast
That to-night shall be his pillow
Where, welcome, he may rest?

"LOVE THE CONQUEROR CAME TO ME"

I

Love the Conqueror came to me,—
He whom I did long deride,—
Gave humility for pride,
April voicing
My rejoicing.
I—who fancied I was free—
Glad to be with garlands tied!

II

Love the Awakener came to me;
Called my sleeping soul to strife,
Offered gift of fuller life
(Wish, the measure
Of my pleasure);
And the bud that knew no bee
Burst, a rose with beauty rife.

III

Love the Tester came to me ;
 For the pæan gave the dirge,
 For caresses gave the scourge
 (Ay, though Fortune
 Did importune),
 Till my breathing seemed to be
 Sorrow's tide at ebb and surge.

IV

Love the Ennobler came to me,
 With the cross as his device,
 Saying, " Shrink not from the price
 (Pain the burden,
 Peace the guerdon) ;
 Sorrow bravely borne shall be
 Doubly sweet as sacrifice."

V

Love the Revealer comes to me
 On this battled height, and shows
 Yonder river of repose :
 " Not by creeping,
 But by leaping,
 Learns the rill the harmony
 That within the river flows."

THE STRONGER SUMMONS*

I

How May doth call us with her sweetest voice,
Fragrant with blossoms on this moonlit night!
"Take of my wine, and in new birth rejoice;
Leave care and toil, the sordid city's plight.
Oh, dying Man, come to the source of Life,
And hush in Nature all the sounds of strife."

II

Wondrous the vision, and we fain would go
But that a nobler pleasure calls us here.
Charm, Nature, as thou wilt, thou canst not throw
A spell to win us like the smile and tear.
In what Love, Friendship, Duty, Service can,
We know God's greatest miracle is Man.

* Written in honor of the distinguished physician Dr. Abraham Jacobi, and read at the banquet given to him in New York city, May 5, 1900, to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of his birth, and included with the *Festschrift* then presented to him by members of the medical profession.

THE FLOWER OF FAME

He sought it before the billow of spring on the meadow
was seen,
When only the flush of the willow was tracing the river
with green ;
He scanned to the edge of the fraying snows that
dappled the mountain-slope,
And ever too late the March sun rose : for he searched
the world with hope.

I saw him at noon of the summer day, and that was the
favorite hour
To one who had hunted from March to May, and never
had found the flower ;
For the light was full, as though the sun were aiding
his eager quest,
And there were no warning shadows to run o'er his
path from east or west.

And still in September's purple and gold he was hunting
the grudging ground,
But not with the steady eye of old or the springtime's
joyous bound ;

If he stopped in his feverish roaming, 't was to question
the darkling air ;

Too early came the gloaming: he was searching with
despair.

And while, for a chance of the rarest, he wanders in
storm or heat,

He is blind to the charm of the fairest ; he is crushing
beneath his feet

The Flower of Every Valley, the Flower of All the Year,
Deep in whose broken blossom the dew lies like a tear.

THE DREAD BEFORE GREAT JOY

I

WITHIN, what gracious store
Of pleasures throng:
Rest, beauty, firelit lore,
Love-breathing song.
Why at the open door
Wait you so long?

II

Oh, why delay to touch
The splendid flower?
Why tremble ere we clutch
The perfect hour?
Is it too near, too much,
The certain dower?

III

Beneath the bride's attire
Her heart stands still—
Half-way from porch to choir—
For joy, not ill
(We shiver before fire
As well as chill).

IV

Home-bound, beyond the bar
I heard again,
An exile from afar,
The tide's refrain:
What did the moment mar?
Ah! 't was not pain.

V

Well may the victor shrink
Aghast at Fame
To hear, on Fortune's brink,
His land's acclaim,
That with its great doth link
His own strange name.

VI

We raise the precious bowl—
To sip and sigh :
The starving takes but dole
Lest he may die ;
Must, then, the famished soul
Its feast put by ?

VII

What if our mortal fear
Were but the dread
Before great joy! How near
Were the loved dead!
Then were the grave more dear
Than bridal bed.

REINCARNATION

“Another world! Another life!” we cry,
And for new chances toward far regions reach;
Yet squander teeming treasure as we sigh,
While every day a new life waits for each.

PREMONITIONS

THERE 's a shadow on the grass
That was never there before ;
And the ripples as they pass
Whisper of an unseen oar ;
And the song we knew by rote
Seems to falter in the throat,
And a footfall, scarcely noted, lingers near the open
door.

Omens that were once but jest
Now are messengers of fate ;
And the blessing held the best
Cometh not or comes too late.
Yet, whatever life may lack,
Not a blown leaf beckons back,
" Forward ! " is the summons. " Forward ! where the
new horizons wait."

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